

# ALLIANCE

PARTNERSHIPS IN DOMESTIC COUNTERTERRORISM



SPRING 2021

(U//FOUO) Domestic Violent  
Extremists Likely Emboldened  
by Capitol Siege  
p. 12

(U//FOUO) Militia Violent  
Extremist Threat  
p. 16

(U//FOUO) RMVEs Using Variety  
of Online Platforms for Violent  
Extremist Activity  
p. 22

(U//FOUO) Persistent Targeting  
of Houses of Worship by US  
Violent Extremists  
p. 30



## (U) THE EVOLVING DOMESTIC TERRORISM THREAT



**(U) THIS PUBLICATION IS DEDICATED TO THE VICTIMS OF TERRORISM AND TO THOSE ON THE FRONT LINES DEFENDING OUR NATION AT HOME AND ABROAD.**

(U) **DISCLAIMER:**  
(U) *Alliance* is a resource to promote and demonstrate the activities of the domestic counterterrorism (CT) community. The National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) manages the production of *Alliance* in coordination with the Department of Homeland Security and Federal Bureau of Investigation. The content of this publication is consist with analysis published by and under the authorities of the respective agencies. Therefore, it does not necessarily represent the official views of, or have the endorsement of, NCTC, DHS, FBI, or the US Government. For further sourcing details, please contact [JCAT@nctc.gov](mailto:JCAT@nctc.gov).

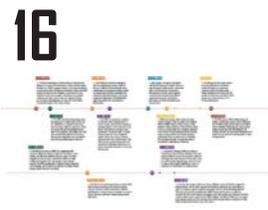
(U) This product may contain US persons information deemed necessary for the intended recipient to understand or assess the information provided. This information is indicated by the label USPER and should be handled in accordance with the recipient's intelligence oversight and information handling procedures.

(U) Membership in a group alone isn't is not indicative of violent extremist activity unless the US gGovernment has specific information to the contrary that the individual is engaged in violent activities or their his or her actions are specifically endorsed by the violent extremist group.



# IN THIS EDITION

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>FEDERAL HIGHLIGHTS</b>	<b>LOCAL HIGHLIGHTS</b>	<b>THE HOMELAND</b>
<b>02</b>	<b>03</b> 	<b>08</b> 	<b>12</b> 
	(U) Interview With Assistant Director Jill Sanborn, FBI Counterterrorism Division	(U) Domestic Terrorism Threat to Critical Infrastructure in Colorado	(U//FOUO) Domestic Violent Extremists Likely Emboldened by Capitol Siege
			<b>14</b> 
			(U//FOUO) Mass Attackers Probably Influencing Future Domestic Violent Extremists

<b>THE HOMELAND</b>	<b>MEDIA &amp; MESSAGING</b>
<b>16</b> 	<b>21</b> 
(U//FOUO) Militia Violent Extremist Threat	(U//FOUO) Minors Playing Prominent Roles in US and European RMVE Activity
	<b>22</b> 
	(U//FOUO) RMVEs Using Variety of Online Platforms for Violent Extremist Activity
	<b>27</b> 
	(U//FOUO) DVEs Exploiting Prominent Art and Meme Sites To Promote Violence and Disseminate Messaging

<b>TACTICS &amp; TARGETS</b>	<b>PREVENTION</b>
<b>28</b> 	<b>30</b> 
(U//FOUO) Varied RMVE Influences Result in Thematic but Diverse Targeting	(U//FOUO) Persistent Targeting of Houses of Worship by US Violent Extremists
	<b>34</b> 
	(U//FOUO) Opportunities To Enhance Terrorism-Prevention Efforts by Applying Lessons Learned From Other Types of Programming
	<b>40</b> 
	(U//FOUO) Expanding US Intervention Programs Will Probably Increase Bystander Reporting

# INTRODUCTION

(U) The National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), in collaboration with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), is pleased to present the ninth edition of *Alliance: Partnerships in Domestic Counterterrorism*. This publication continues to advance each organization's counterterrorism (CT) mission by providing domestic partners with access to terrorism information and analysis as envisioned in the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004.

(U//FOUO) This issue of *Alliance* addresses the increasingly diverse and persistent terrorist threat landscape in the United States and includes analysis and insights about US-based domestic violent extremists (DVEs) motivated by a range of violent ideologies and grievances. The deadly breach of the US Capitol in Washington on 6 January underscores the enduring threat of violence from "DVEs" as well as the importance of Federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement partnering to effectively detect, prevent, and respond to terrorist attacks. The FBI, DHS, and NCTC define a DVE as an individual based and operating primarily within the United States or its territories without direction or inspiration from a foreign terrorist group or other foreign power who seeks to further political or social goals wholly or in part through unlawful acts of force or violence. The mere advocacy of political or social positions, political activism, use of strong rhetoric, or generalized philosophic embrace of violent tactics does not constitute violent extremism and is constitutionally protected.

(U//FOUO) The "Federal Highlights," features an interview with Jill Sanborn, Assistant Director of the FBI Counterterrorism Division, who answers

questions related to the changing nature of the domestic terrorism threat and the challenges law enforcement officials face in countering these threats. "Local Highlights" features an article from the Colorado Information Analysis Center that examines how individuals and groups in Colorado espousing DVE ideologies will continue to target critical infrastructure in the state.

(U//FOUO) This issue contains articles that focus on domestic terrorism trends in the Homeland threat environment, including the sustained influence of past DVE attackers, the increase in minors involved in DVE activity, and the militia violent extremist and involuntary celibate violent extremist movements. We also include an exploration of how DVEs use online platforms for violent extremist activity— such as their exploitation of mainstream social media platforms, chat applications, and art and meme sites—to promote and disseminate violent extremist messaging.

(U//FOUO) We also provide some insights into DVE tactics, examining the diverse set of targets and the persistent interest in attacking houses of worship in the United States. Finally, we feature analysis related to opportunities to enhance terrorism prevention by expanding intervention programs and applying lessons learned from non-terrorism initiatives.

(U) We welcome content from our state, local, tribal, and territorial first-responder partners for future editions of this publication. Submissions should be related to your current work and endorsed by your organization. Please contact our editorial staff at [JCAT@nctc.gov](mailto:JCAT@nctc.gov) for submission information and deadlines. 

(U) FEDERAL HIGHLIGHTS

# AN INTERVIEW WITH

## ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

# JILL SANBORN

## FBI COUNTERTERRORISM DIVISION

(U//FOUO) Jill Sanborn has spent most of her 22 years in the FBI focusing on counterterrorism. As a new FBI Agent assigned to the Phoenix Division in the summer of 2001, she volunteered to join the Division's counterterrorism (CT) squad. She had an expected start date of September 17 but was called into duty early after the attacks on the morning of 9/11. Following her time in Phoenix, she joined the FBI's Counterterrorism Fly Team, a highly trained cadre of CT Agents and analysts who stand ready to deploy anywhere in the world at a moment's notice. Sanborn's next assignment was as a detailee to the CIA, where she spent two years as an FBI liaison. Sanborn continued her CT investigative career as a Supervisory Special Agent for an extra-territorial squad at the Washington Field Office and then as Assistant Special Agent in Charge in the Los Angeles Field Office, where she soon found herself coordinating the Bureau's investigation of the terrorist attack in San Bernardino, California. Following another CT assignment at FBI Headquarters, Sanborn was named Special Agent in Charge (SAC) of the Minneapolis Division of the FBI, an area that had just seen two attempted terrorism attacks, one at a university and the other at a shopping mall. In February 2020, FBI Director Christopher Wray named Sanborn the Assistant Director of the FBI's Counterterrorism Division. She is the first woman to hold that position. Alliance Magazine sat down with Sanborn to discuss the changing nature of the CT threat, the challenges facing the Intelligence Community, and the FBI's efforts to combat those threats.

(U//FOUO) Note: This interview was conducted before the siege on the United States Capitol on 6 January. According to Sanborn, the FBI's Counterterrorism Division has devoted significant resources to the investigation into the attack and is working with each FBI field office to bring cases against those involved in criminal acts during the siege.



## (U) JILL SANBORN INTERVIEW

### (U//FOUO) Discuss the evolution of the terrorism threat.

(U//FOUO) Over the course of my 22 years in the FBI, I've seen how the threat has changed from 9/11 to where it is today. I've also had the benefit of seeing it from different angles, whether that was as a case agent in the command post after the San Bernardino attack, being detailed to the CIA, or being on the ground anywhere from Pakistan to Iraq and from Yemen to Guantanamo Bay. As the head of the Counterterrorism Division, I'm also seeing how the terrorists have shifted both their ideology and the ways they want to attack us. Because of those experiences, I know that the threat we face today is more dynamic and more complex than ever before. But throughout it all, the one thing that has remained constant is the FBI's commitment to preventing all acts of terrorism in the United States and against US interests overseas.

### (U//FOUO) Talk about the change in mindset that was required of the FBI during that period.

(U//FOUO) After the 9/11 attacks, we asked ourselves, "What did we miss? What could we have done better?" And every day since, we have asked ourselves, "What do we need to do to keep the American people safe from terrorism today, tomorrow, and the day after that?" We've torn down the walls separating agencies and preventing collaboration. We've significantly improved the way we share information, not just among law enforcement and the Intelligence Community, but also with the private sector, academia, and foreign partners. Sharing is now the rule rather than the exception. Because of the increased collaboration, we've developed a whole-of-government approach to combating terrorism over the past nearly 20 years. We transitioned

from deconflicting with partners to fully integrating. During our investigations, we now bring the full force of the US Intelligence, law enforcement, and judicial system to bear against these actors.

(U//FOUO) We've also had to change the way we think about the enemy. We have seen the threat evolve from the sophisticated, externally directed plot to the individual, inspired attack. In 2015, while the threat was significant with the rise of ISIS, we were able to place the most significant CT threats we encountered into buckets of specific Foreign Terrorist Organization actors. These threats were definitely immense, but we had faced a similar threat before, so there were three elements that allowed us to overcome them: our investigative expertise, collection, and coordinated efforts with the Intelligence Community and our Federal, state, local, and international partners.

### (U//FOUO) But the threats are also changing, right?

(U//FOUO) They are. The threats we face today have both expanded and evolved, and they are also as different as the tools we will need in the coming years to fight them. To be sure, we are still laser focused on the threat posed by terrorist groups like ISIS and al-Qa'ida. We can't lose sight of that. However, the primary terrorist threat to the Homeland today, without question, is the one posed by lone actors. This is what keeps a lot of us up at night—the insular threat posed by lone actors. This threat has created a new set of challenges for all of us in law enforcement, as there are a greater number of potential threats and far fewer "dots" to connect.

### (U//FOUO) Talk more about lone actors and the threats they pose.

(U//FOUO) Undoubtedly, the greatest threat we face in the US is

the one posed by lone actors who are radicalized online and look to attack soft, familiar targets with readily available weapons. This threat is the new constant and limits our chances to detect and stop violent extremists before they can act. We see the lone-actor threat manifest with homegrown violent extremists (HVEs) and domestic violent extremists (DVEs), and both are based primarily within the United States. HVEs are individuals who have been radicalized primarily in the United States, and who are inspired by violent Salafi-Jihadism, but who are not receiving individualized direction from foreign terrorist organizations. DVE inspiration emanates from influences like racial bias, perceptions of government or law enforcement overreach, socio-political conditions, and feelings of disenfranchisement within society. Many HVEs and DVEs radicalize and mobilize to violence in response to a unique and personalized mix of ideological, sociopolitical, and personal grievances. The targets of their violence have included large public gatherings, government personnel and facilities, houses of worship, and retail locations. In the last few years, some HVE and DVE attacks have centered on government, military, and lawenforcement-related targets and personnel and lawful protests, respectively. The bottom line is that they could strike anywhere, from big cities to small towns, and at any time.

### (U//FOUO) It seems like one of the biggest problems is anticipating the timing and target of an attack from someone who has self-radicalized.

(U//FOUO) That's the challenge we face. If you combine violent ideologies, individualized grievances, and personal factors, that's a dangerous recipe. You may have heard the term "flash to bang." That's how we describe someone who

goes from thinking and planning an attack to carrying it out. What we've seen is that an attack can be planned and executed in a matter of days or even hours instead of what used to be weeks, months, or even years. These attacks are often against soft, familiar targets, and they use simple and agile methods of attack. That could mean guns and knives, to cars or primitive improvised explosive devices that they can build from finding a recipe on the Internet.

### **(U//FOUO) How has the threat from domestic terrorists evolved?**

(U//FOUO) Last spring marked 25 years since the bombing of a Federal building in Oklahoma City. That horrible attack remains the deadliest domestic terrorism mass-casualty attack in US history, and it was carried out by DVEs on

**(U//FOUO) AS WE LOOK AT HOW THE DT THREAT HAS EVOLVED, I BELIEVE THAT WE NEED TO START CHALLENGING HOW WE LOOK AT THE HISTORIC ASSESSMENTS THAT WE'VE HAD AND BE OPENMINDED TO HOW THE THREATS THEY POSE CONTINUE TO SHIFT AND EXPAND**

US soil. It helped shape how the FBI thinks about our domestic terrorism investigations. Unfortunately, we are seeing an increase in domestic terrorism-related violence. DVEs caused more deaths in the United States than international terrorists have in recent years. In fact, 2019 was the deadliest year for DVE violence since

the attack in Oklahoma City. (Editor's note: The attack in Oklahoma City in 1995 killed 168 adults and children and wounded hundreds.)

(U//FOUO) Many of the same grievances used by domestic violent extremists to justify their crimes in the mid-1990s continue to influence violent extremists and their targeting choices [today]. These include perceptions of government or law enforcement overreach, racial tensions, socio-political conditions, feelings of disenfranchisement within society, and reactions to legislation or world events.

### **(U//FOUO) But those concerns are nothing new, correct? What's changing?**

(U//FOUO) Technology. The Internet and social media have increased the opportunities for anyone who, with just a few keystrokes, wants to access violent extremist ideologies. An anonymous individual sitting in front of a computer in one state or country can communicate with, encourage, and inspire violent extremist actors thousands of miles away with the assistance of social media. And, because of the use of encrypted applications, it's becoming more and more difficult for law enforcement to identify and disrupt these folks—even with a lawful warrant or court order.

(U//FOUO) As we look at how the DT threat has evolved, I believe that we need to start challenging how we look at the historic assessments that we've had and be openminded to how the threats they pose continue to shift and expand. For example, while we know lethal DVE attackers have historically acted alone, we are more and more often seeing individuals get together locally or regionally to discuss their violent extremist ideologies and seek to carry out their goals. Network analysis, which we've been good at for a long time in the international terrorism (IT) realm, is a critical piece

of our DT work, as well. We saw that in the recent case involving a number of suspects who were arrested after their alleged plot to kidnap the governor of Michigan.

(U//FOUO) We are seeing traditional actors working with nontraditional partners and proxies to achieve their goals. We are also increasingly seeing threats that don't fall neatly into our historical terrorism categories. Some of our subjects combine ideologies and personalize their own unique ideology to justify their end desire to commit violence. These ideologies are often complementary and related to each other but, in some cases, have separate and even opposing goals. In other words, these are people committed to violence and may ascribe to aspects of one or more violent extremist ideologies as much to justify their commitment to violence than to the ideologies, themselves. Just this summer, the New York Joint Terrorism Task Force arrested an individual for planning an attack on his US Army Unit by posting sensitive details about the unit, allowing multiple extremists, including both a purported member of al-Qa'ida and individuals associated with racially or ethnically motivated violent extremist ideology, access to these details.

### **(U//FOUO) What are some of the biggest challenges you face today?**

(U//FOUO) One issue that continues to limit law enforcement's ability to disrupt today's increasingly insular actors is the inability to access data, even with a warrant or court order, due to encryption. Device manufacturers and online platforms have employed encryption in such a manner that only the users or parties to private communications can access the content of the communications or devices. This development has meant that, in recent years, the FBI has seen a decline in our ability to

## (U) JILL SANBORN INTERVIEW

gain access to the content of both domestic and international terrorist communications via lawful warrant or court order. We certainly recognize how encryption increases the overall safety and security of the Internet for users. But in fulfilling the FBI's duty to the American people to prevent acts of terrorism, the inability to access either the content of communications or data that are held by a known or suspected terrorist, pursuant to legal process, is getting more and more difficult, inhibiting our ability to conduct thorough investigative activities and collect necessary evidence. The online, encrypted nature of radicalization, along with the insular nature of most of today's attack plotters, leaves investigators with fewer dots to connect in both the DT and IT realms.

(U//FOUO) This was evident in the December 2019 shooting at the Naval Air Station in Pensacola. The now deceased terrorist was able to communicate using warrant-proof, end-to-end encrypted apps deliberately to evade detection. It took us several months to unilaterally gain access into his phones and discover his significant ties to al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula. While we were trying to do that, we did not know whether he was a lone actor or whether his associates may have been plotting additional terrorist attacks. If law enforcement loses the ability to detect criminal activity, even with a court order, we cannot be as effective in our ability to protect the American people.

### (U//FOUO) What developments are you seeing in DT threats?

(U//FOUO) For the last several years, the most fatal threat posed by DVEs has stemmed from what we call racially or ethnically motivated violent extremist actors, or RMVEs. RMVEs include the use or threat of force or violence derived from bias related to race or ethnicity, held by

the actor against others or a given population group. However, in 2020, anti-government/anti-authority violent extremists were responsible for three of the four lethal attacks in 2020, which resulted in three deaths.

### (U//FOUO) Can you share recent arrest successes?

(U//FOUO) It may surprise you to know that over the past several years, the FBI has arrested over 200 terrorism subjects each year. And to reduce the threat, together with our partners, we're taking terrorism subjects off the streets using every tool we've got, not

of 2019, Lecron was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment after pleading guilty to material support and terrorism charges. Armstrong was sentenced to six years' imprisonment for violation of Title 18 USC § 844(n), as well. I know several of your readers may be surprised to see a material support to terrorism charge on a DT subject, but it can be done if the act meets underlying predicate offenses, such as arson.

(U//FOUO) Additionally, an arrest in September 2020 of two individuals for conspiracy to provide material support and attempting to provide material support or resources to a designated

## (U//FOUO) THE WORD 'PARTNERSHIPS' PROBABLY DOESN'T ACCURATELY DESCRIBE THE DEPTHS OF THOSE RELATIONSHIPS BECAUSE IT GOES MUCH DEEPER THAN THAT...SOME OF THE GREATEST PARTNERSHIPS I'VE HAD HAVE TURNED INTO THE STRONGEST FRIENDSHIPS.

only federal terrorism charges, but also other Federal, state, and local charges, along with other disruption and mitigation strategies.

(U//FOUO) I want to highlight for you where we have been successful in applying material support to terrorism charges in DT cases. In December 2018, the FBI arrested Elizabeth Lecron<sup>USPER</sup> and charged her with transporting explosives and explosive material for the purpose of harming others. Lecron was taken into custody days after purchasing black powder and hundreds of screws she allegedly intended to use to make a bomb. During numerous interactions with FBI undercover agents and sources, Lecron expressed a desire to commit a mass murder and hoped to do so after joining with other anarchist violent extremists. Vincent Armstrong<sup>USPER</sup>, Lecron's boyfriend, was also arrested in December 2018 and charged with lying to investigators following Lecron's arrest. In November

foreign terrorist organization, when they allegedly were endeavoring to advance "Boogaloo"—or second civil war—and developed an interest in providing arms to Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of HAMAS.

### (U//FOUO) Let's talk about partnerships. How can the public as well as Federal, state, or local partners assist the FBI and law enforcement with the CT mission?

The online, encrypted nature of radicalization, along with the insular nature of most of those who are plotting an attack, leave us with fewer dots to connect. Because of that, we are increasingly relying on the bystanders in these actors' networks—family members, peers, community leaders, and strangers—to notice changes in behavior and report concerns before violence occurs. In nearly every case of an attack, there was usually someone who saw something—someone who

thought something was a bit strange or something didn't feel right. But for one reason or another, they didn't say anything.

(U//FOUO) One of the Intelligence Community's flagship initiatives for increasing bystander reporting of potential international terrorism actors is the "Homegrown Violent Extremist Mobilization Indicators" booklet. This unclassified booklet produced jointly by FBI, NCTC, and DHS describes observable indicators that someone may be preparing to engage in violent extremist activity. The indicators cover activities observable online by family or friends, religious leaders, and private-sector companies, such as those in the financial or shipping industries. It's readily available for download. We're also working with our partners in the Bureau of Prisons and others to recognize and understand how to report potential radicalization activities for domestic violent extremists.

(U//FOUO) To my earlier point, I want people to think of this as similar to the "See Something, Say Something" campaign for the modern threat. While family members and close friends likely are best positioned to observe concerning behaviors, previous research has determined family members and peers often are resistant to sharing their concerns with authorities, which further complicates detection efforts.

(U//FOUO) Our [JTTFs] are hard at work engaging with the public and our private-sector partners to equip them with resources for reporting concerning behavior to law enforcement. With this shift in the terrorism threat, we recognize that tips from the public will be one of the most powerful tools we have in detecting and preventing attacks. It's been said "It takes a network to defeat a network." While the whole-of-government approach has

been successful in mitigating many of the threats posed by overseas terrorism networks, a whole-of-society approach will be required to mitigate the evolving lone-actor terrorism threat within our borders.

### **(U//FOUO) How have the FBI's partnerships evolved over the years?**

(U//FOUO) Partnerships, whoever they are with, are part of the FBI's DNA—they are force multipliers in keeping our communities safe. I think that the success of JTTFs demonstrates the incredible value of these relationships. As many of you may or may not know, our JTTFs were established in 1980 to combat domestic terrorism. They have grown from a handful in 1995 to the more than 200 today, and they are critical to the FBI's ability to evolve and meet the globalized threat posed by terrorist actors.

(U//FOUO) But our partnerships are not limited just to other law enforcement agencies. In addition to traditional law enforcement partners, we also work to establish relationships with mental health programs, community organizations, and other invaluable local resources.

(U//FOUO) Additionally, we continue to expand our partnerships beyond law enforcement to academia and the private sector. We understand the value of remaining a "go-to" for private entities should suspicious activity or individuals be identified. We also understand the importance of sharing what we know with our partners and how that helps them better position themselves to protect our communities. But we also recognize the important role private businesses play in combating terrorism, particularly in flagging potentially suspicious individuals seeking to acquire weapons or their components.

(U//FOUO) Equally as important are our partnerships within the

communities we serve. Today, nearly half of our cases are predicated on tips from the public or referrals from other law enforcement agencies and private-sector companies. Finally, on a personal note, I'm a big believer in partnerships. Throughout my time with the FBI, I've seen the value of strong partnerships. When I was on the FBI's Fly Team, we would travel to countries, often with a very small FBI footprint. I needed our IC and foreign partners to help us get the job done. When I was in San Bernardino, we needed our IC, as well as state and local partners and the community, to help us figure out the details behind the attack. Minneapolis is home to several Fortune 500 companies, and as SAC, I needed those partnerships to help warn them of the threats that we see to their business and to learn from them about the threats they may be seeing—from their cyber infrastructure to their intellectual property. As I met with them, I realized that we couldn't face the threats alone, and that, if we didn't work together, we couldn't be effective. All of these cases were different, but they all relied on partnerships. We preach the value of partnerships here because we cannot be successful without them.

(U//FOUO) But, as I think about it, the word "partnerships" probably doesn't accurately describe the depths of those relationships because it goes much deeper than that. As I think back on my career, some of the greatest partnerships I've had have turned into the strongest friendships. It makes sense if you think about it. Those relationships are rooted in a deep sense of mutual trust, and you're both working with the same goal in mind. And frankly, in this line of work, the stakes are pretty high, so it's easy to see how those strong bonds are formed. 

# (U) Domestic Terrorism Threat to Critical Infrastructure in Colorado

By The Colorado Information Analysis Center

(U//FOUO) The Colorado Information Analysis Center assesses that individuals and groups espousing domestic violent extremist (DVE) ideologies in Colorado will almost certainly continue to target critical infrastructure as a means of destabilizing society and causing fear.

- (U//FOUO) Last year brought various public safety challenges, including a pandemic and nationwide protests. These events provided a platform for certain individuals and groups espousing domestic terrorism ideologies to exploit fear and cause unrest in furtherance of their political and social goals. Many DVEs targeted or threatened critical infrastructure in the midst of these events, exacerbating an already tumultuous period in the United States.

#### (U) ENERGY SECTOR

(U//FOUO) Most of Colorado's critical infrastructure is within the energy sector, with the state ranking 27th for national

production of electricity. Colorado is also a major producer of oil and natural gas, ranking sixth in the nation in natural gas production in 2017 and fifth in the nation in oil production in 2018. Colorado also has the third-largest natural gas reserve in the nation. Nefarious actors have a proven interest in targeting the energy sector and, although the following events in Colorado last year were not specifically attributed to domestic terrorism, they underscore the vulnerabilities and threats to this sector.

- (U) Sometime between 29 and 31 May, multiple rounds were fired at a battery site in the northern part of the state. The rounds hit the oil tank, a separator, and a sign, missing the wellhead by inches.
- (U) On 1 May, a Brighton, Colorado, man was arrested for randomly firing a weapon at oilfield workers who were working at a well pad in Weld County.

## (U) EMERGENCY SERVICES SECTOR

(U//FOUO) Colorado's emergency services sector is vast and interdependent. Although emergency services' infrastructure is a common target for groups and individuals espousing domestic violent extremist ideologies, the death of George Floyd while in police custody in the spring of 2020 amplified the threat. The lawful protests that followed provided a stage for domestic violent extremists, as did protests of the policies related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- (U) Following the arrest on 1 May of a Colorado militia violent extremist who planned an armed protest related to COVID-19, a misinformation campaign was launched and resulted in the doxxing of a local county sheriff.
- (U) On 28 January, two self-identified sovereign citizens trespassed at a military headquarters in Colorado and filmed the building and responding law enforcement officials who contacted them. The individuals inquired about facial recognition used in the US and said that they considered law enforcement to be "terrorists."
- (U) On 2 May, an individual in Colorado posted on Facebook that he was willing to kill any law enforcement who attempted to enforce mask-wearing policies during COVID-19. He claimed that he would not be alone and had friends coming for "revenge and an uprising."

## (U) COMMERCIAL FACILITIES SECTOR

(U//FOUO) Some of the most infamous and lethal terrorist attacks in recent US history have occurred at commercial facilities. Unrestricted public access to commercial facility infrastructure makes this sector a prime target for nefarious actors because of the ease of access and lack of visible security at most locations. Most facilities and events within the commercial facilities sector are meant to draw large crowds, posing a challenge to law enforcement and public safety officials who are trying to deter attacks. Large crowds also provide cover for attackers who wish to elude law enforcement.

- (U) From 28 to 31 May, anarchist extremists vandalized commercial buildings and other structures in Denver during Black Lives Matter protests.

- (U) On 1 May, the FBI arrested a militia violent extremist who planned an armed protest in Denver and made threats to cause trouble. The FBI found four pipe bombs in his home.
- (U) On 29 May, the Denver police seized military-style assault rifles from a vehicle occupied by people who identified themselves as anti-government "Boogaloo Bois" near a protest in Denver.



## (U) COMMUNICATIONS SECTOR

(U//FOUO) The newest development in communications infrastructure, 5G, has been at the forefront of controversy and the subject of threats. Colorado began integrating 5G wireless network capabilities in April 2019 and has established 5G infrastructure in various locations around the state. The first half of 2020, particularly when the COVID-19 pandemic emerged, saw a spike in attacks and threats toward communications infrastructure. Many of the attacks and threats were perpetrated by unidentified individuals or groups, making attributing them to a domestic terrorism ideology difficult;

however, these attacks highlight vulnerabilities domestic violent extremists can exploit.

- (U) On 5 April, a man allegedly posing as a cable technician cut Internet cables in a neighborhood in Englewood, affecting homes in the area.
- (U) On 25 April, a Colorado-based individual damaged the entrance gate of a privacy fence around a cell tower site by removing several pieces of the wooden slats.



## (U) HEALTHCARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH SECTOR

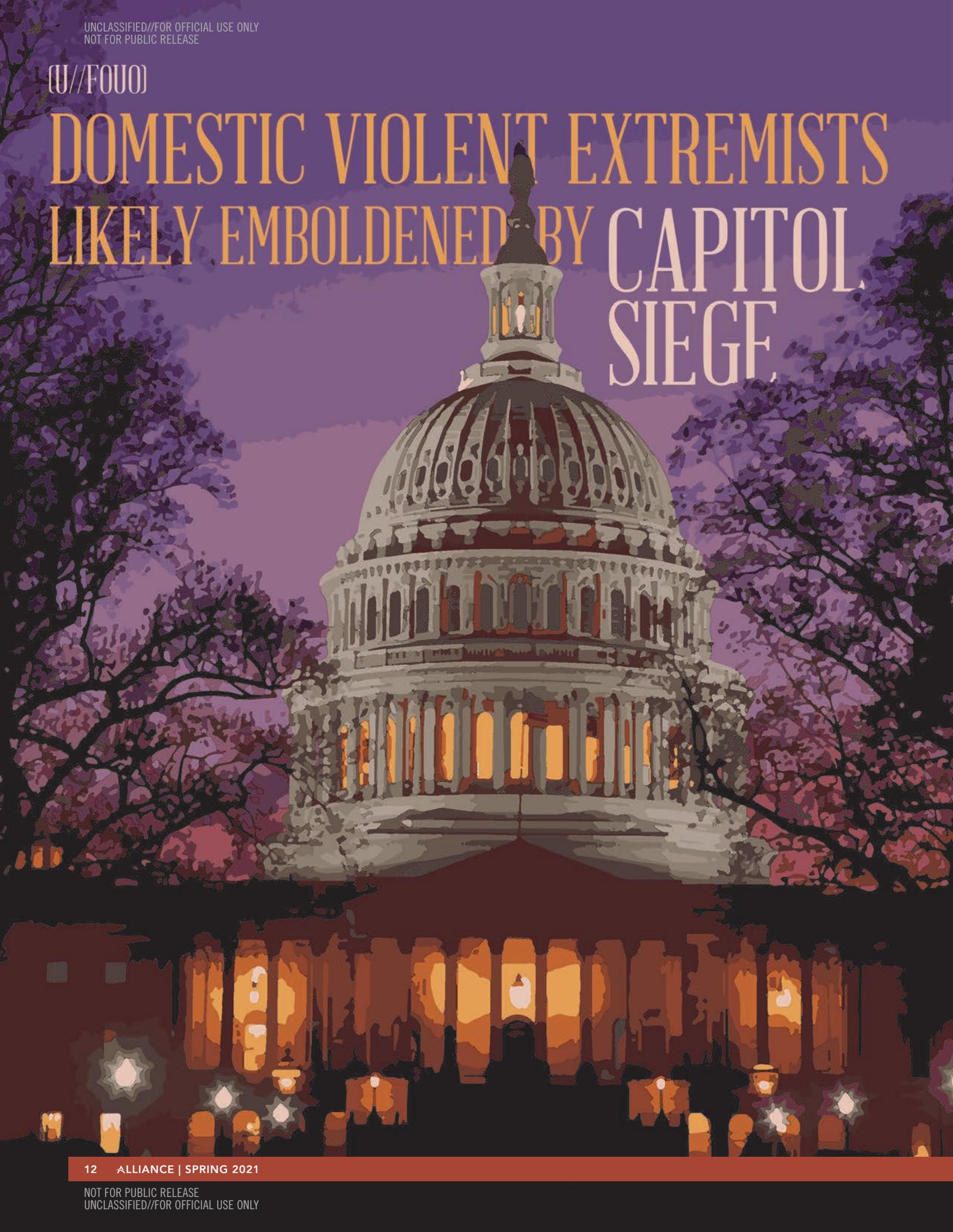
(U//FOUO) The healthcare and public health sector has been the primary target for most anti-abortion violent extremists, but since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the sector has moved to the forefront for people espousing other ideologies who want to spread fear and destabilize society.

- (U) On 8 March, two anti-government individuals trespassed at the CDC office in northern Colorado. One was wearing body armor, and both carried knives. They appeared to be livestreaming and said they would return to have more “fun.” 

(U//FOUO) A Denver-based RMVE USPER, continues to inspire domestic terrorists through his influential book, *Siege*, a collection of articles that emphasizes gaining power through armed conflict rather than nonviolent political means. The USPER derives much of his inspiration from historically violent actors, such as Charles Manson and Adolf Hitler. Members of the RMVE group Atomwaffen Division (AWD)—which has been linked to at least five US murders since 2017—idolizes the USPER’s teachings. AWD and affiliated groups are often identifiable by the skull masks and military attire they wear in propaganda and threatening images online, along with the word “Siege,” which the group uses as a symbol of its violent accelerationist intentions.

(U//FOUO)

# DOMESTIC VIOLENT EXTREMISTS LIKELY EMBOLDENED BY CAPITOL SIEGE



(U//FOUO) We assess that the violent breach of the US Capitol on 6 January 2021 will increase the threat that domestic violent extremists (DVEs) pose to commit violence against other symbols of government or people with opposing political views—even months later. The Capitol breach almost certainly exacerbated an already heightened threat environment across the United States related to perceptions of the Presidential election and government transition and will probably galvanize and increase collaboration among a variety of DVEs.

- (U//FOUO) The breach of the Capitol built on DVE activity in 2020 that exploited lawful protests to promote, organize, and plot lethal violence against ideological opponents and other targets of DVE grievances. Violent extremists' perceptions that the breach advanced their ideological goals probably will embolden anti-government anti-authority violent extremists, specifically militia violent extremists, and other DVEs motivated by government conspiracy theories or partisan grievances.
- (U//FOUO) Since the Capitol breach, rhetoric against Federal, state, and local officials nationwide has increased, based on our review of social media and higher volume of law enforcement tips. Social media platforms' recent efforts to remove accounts commonly used by some DVEs will probably challenge our ability to identify and warn of threats as DVEs shift to more secure platforms.
- (U//FOUO) The Capitol breach will probably be used as a recruitment tool online for DVE movements, which will seek to gain adherents based on the attack's perceived success and violent imagery. Some DVEs have treated the shooting death of a woman, an alleged conspiracy theory supporter and military veteran, as an act of martyrdom. 

(U//FOUO) FBI, DHS, and NCTC define a **domestic violent extremist** as an individual based and operating primarily within the United States or its territories without direction or inspiration from a foreign terrorist group or other foreign power who seeks to further political or social goals wholly or in part through unlawful acts of force or violence. The mere advocacy of political or social positions, political activism, use of strong rhetoric, or generalized philosophic embrace of violent tactics may not constitute extremism, and may be constitutionally protected.

(U//FOUO) **Anti-government or anti-authority violent extremism** encompasses the potentially unlawful use or threat of force or violence, in furtherance of political and/or social agendas, which are deemed to derive from anti-government or anti-authority sentiment, including opposition to perceived economic, social, or racial hierarchies; or perceived government overreach, negligence, or illegitimacy.

(U//FOUO) **Militia violent extremism** falls within the overarching domestic terrorism threat category of anti-government or anti-authority violent extremism. FBI and DHS define militia violent extremists (MVEs) as individuals who seek, wholly or in part through unlawful acts of force or violence, to further their belief that the US Government is purposely exceeding its Constitutional authority and is attempting to establish a totalitarian regime. Consequently, these individuals oppose many Federal and state laws and regulations, particularly those related to firearms ownership. MVEs take overt steps to violently resist or facilitate the overthrow of the US Government. The mere advocacy of political or social positions, political activism, use of strong rhetoric, or generalized philosophic embrace of violent tactics may not constitute extremism and may be constitutionally protected.

(U//FOUO) **Racially or ethnically motivated violent extremism** encompasses the potentially unlawful use or threat of force or violence, in furtherance of political and/or social agendas, which are deemed to derive from bias, often related to race or ethnicity, held by the actor against others, including a given population group.

(U//FOUO)

# MASS ATTACKERS PROBABLY INFLUENCING FUTURE DOMESTIC VIOLENT EXTREMISTS

(U//FOUO) We assess that lethal domestic violent extremists (DVEs) and their published manifestos perpetuate the spread of violence and will continue to inspire future attacks across a range of ideologies. Archiving and sharing manifestos through social media and online image and message boards, particularly those that are popular among racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists (RMVEs)<sup>a</sup>—such as Telegram—extend their lifespan and influence. The manifestos authored by Breivik, Tarrant, US persons Roof and Rodger, and two other DVEs continue to circulate online.

- (U//FOUO) Brenton Tarrant—the Australian RMVE who attacked two New Zealand mosques in March 2019 and killed 51 people—posted a manifesto on 8chan expressing his ideology and advocating further violence. Five attackers, including two

alleged Homeland RMVE attackers in April and August 2019, specifically referenced this attack in their own manifestos.

- (U//FOUO) Elliot Rodger—an involuntary celibate violent extremist<sup>b</sup> (IVE) responsible for the Isla Vista attack in 2014, which killed six people—posted a written manifesto and uploaded a recorded video statement before his attack. Rodger has been cited by name in several mass attackers' written and video statements.
- (U//FOUO) Mainstream media coverage of domestic terrorist attackers amplifies their reach worldwide. Sociological studies show that mainstream media rebroadcasting of violent and dramatic content can lead to copycat attacks using similar tactics. 

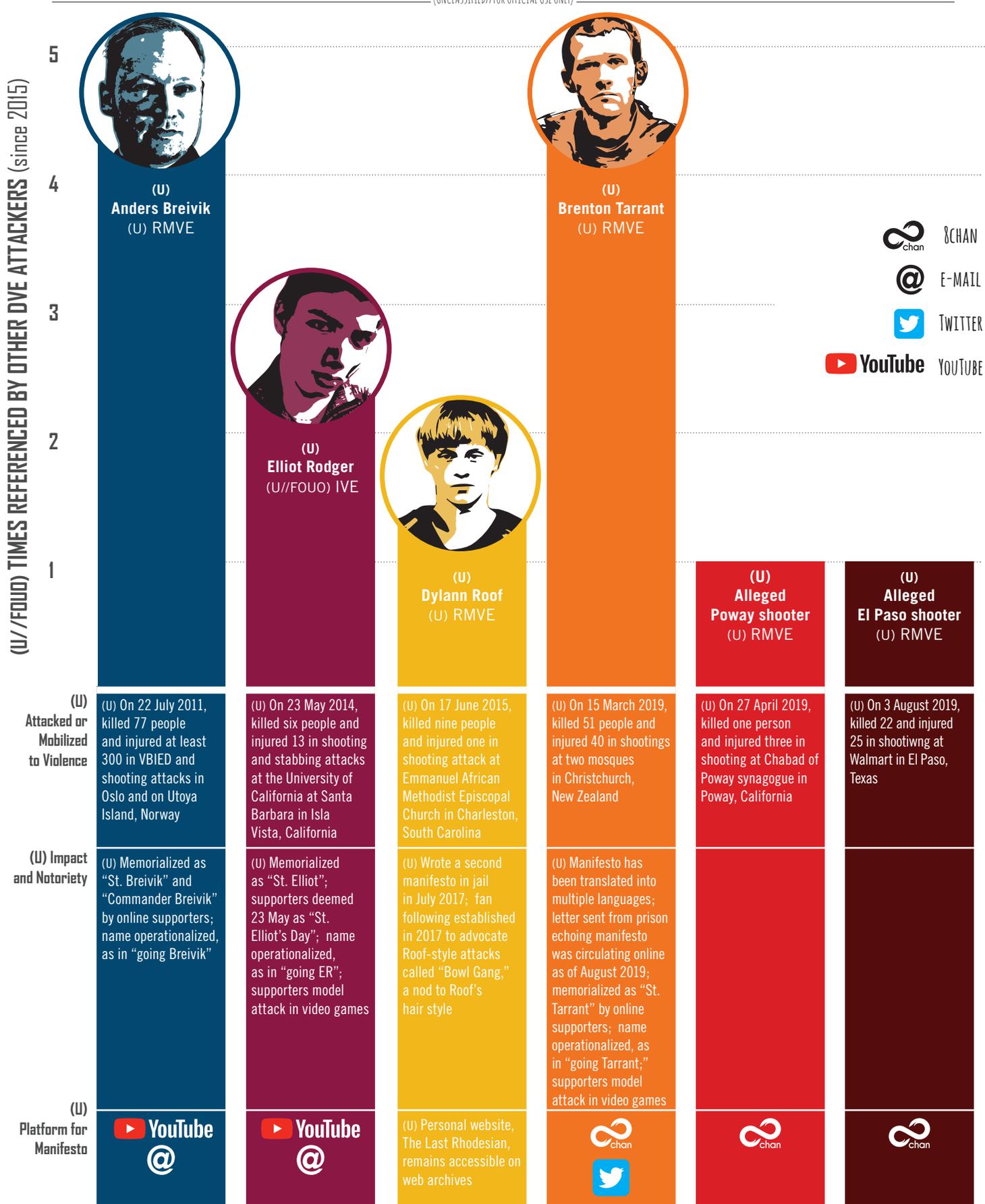
<sup>a</sup>(U//FOUO) Racially or ethnically motivated violent extremism (RMVE): This threat encompasses the potentially unlawful use or threat of force or violence in furtherance of political and/or social agendas that are deemed to derive from bias often related to race, held by the actor against others, including a given population group.

<sup>b</sup>(U//FOUO) Involuntary celibate violent extremists (IVEs) are individuals who use unlawful threats of force or violence on the basis of their perception that society has denied them the romantic and sexual attention to which they are entitled.

# (U) INFLUENTIAL DOMESTIC TERRORISM ATTACKERS WORLDWIDE

(UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

(U//FOUO) TIMES REFERENCED BY OTHER DVE ATTACKERS (since 2015)



- chan
- E-MAIL
- TWITTER
- YouTube

# (U) Militia Violent Extremist Threat

**(U//FOUO) Militia violent extremists (MVEs) justify criminal or violent activity based on their interpretation of the US Constitution, viewing themselves as self-appointed protectors, a role that they perceive to be consistent with a well-armed citizenry sanctioned by the Second Amendment. MVEs cite perceived government abuses of power or bureaucratic incompetence for conducting critical tasks, such as ensuring public safety, to justify illegal use of violence or criminal activity. Additionally, some MVEs view perceived flaws in American society as critical threats that most likely will lead to the unlawful suspension of civil liberties, mass detention of US citizens, and foreign invasion or occupation. The mere advocacy of political or social positions, political activism, use of strong or hateful rhetoric, or generalized philosophic embrace of violent tactics may not constitute extremism and may be constitutionally protected.**

**(U//FOUO) Threat to the Homeland and other US Interests:** The MVE threat derives primarily from individuals who mobilize within small cells or groups and have access to firearms or explosives, either legally or illegally. MVEs target individuals and institutions that they perceive to be a threat to their constitutional rights or pose a social or security threat to the United States. This includes law enforcement, government personnel and facilities, US-based Muslims and Islamic centers, suspected undocumented immigrants and drug traffickers along the US-Mexico border, suspected looters, antifascists, and supporters of movements whose ideologies they oppose.

## (U) ABOUT

**(U//FOUO) Ideology:** MVEs' ideology and rhetoric is based on their interpretation of the US Constitution. Grievances and drivers are typically rooted in perceived threats to their conceptions of US security, culture, and society from the US Government or individuals and communities they view as external or dangerous to the American people. MVEs' perception of government overreach—including law enforcement's abuse of power—is the most common and enduring MVE grievance, especially in terms of gun control, policing, and public land use issues. The perceived threat of Islam and US-based Muslims; the perceived threat of undocumented immigrants and drug traffickers; and the perceived threat of antifascists, activists with opposing views, and looters are among MVEs' grievances against nongovernment entities.

(U//FOUO) MVEs have a deep and enduring belief in conspiracy theories. These conspiracy theories are rooted in the belief that the government abuses its power, is tyrannical, or is negligent in fulfilling its responsibilities to its citizens.<sup>3</sup> Common conspiracy theories among MVEs include:

- (U//FOUO) There will be a violent conflict between the US Government and its citizens.
- (U//FOUO) A new world order in which a tyrannical, socialist "one-world" government—led by the UN and collaborators within the US Government—will take over the world and eliminate individual freedom using Federal Emergency Management Agency–run concentration camps; and
- (U//FOUO) Events such as 9/11 and mass shootings are false-flag operations orchestrated by the US

<sup>3</sup>(U) Conspiracy theories are relevant when examining the reasons MVEs, based on their beliefs, advocate violence, often in the form of a revolution or violent uprising.

Government to expand its powers by manipulating the public through fear and placing blame for these events on innocent third parties.

**(U//FOUO) Active Regions:** MVEs are active throughout much of the United States and have sometimes demonstrated a willingness to travel across multiple states to engage in criminal activity. Most MVE activity is not specific to or constrained by geography, although some issues are more relevant in certain areas. For example, conflicts with the government about land and water use are typically centered in western states, and threats against undocumented immigrants and suspected drug traffickers occur mostly along the US-Mexico border.

**(U//FOUO) Worldwide Adherents:** Unknown. The state of the MVE threat internationally cannot be determined because MVE ideology is inherently US-focused due to its basis in a specific interpretation of the US Constitution. MVEs seldom foster international connections to plan or conduct attacks targeting the United States or foreign territories. In rare instances, MVEs have connected with like-minded Canadians who were predominately interested in accessing and using weapons they would otherwise not have had the opportunity to use in their home country.

**(U//FOUO) Associated Extremist Groups:** MVEs have collaborated with other domestic violent extremists (DVEs), specifically sovereign citizen violent extremists,<sup>b</sup> particularly in their confrontations with Federal agencies about issues related to public land use in western states. Although some MVEs are publicly opposed to racially or ethnically motivated violent extremist (RMVE) ideology espousing superiority of the white race, MVE

targets sometimes overlap with RMVE target selection, based on opposition to the government, anti-fascists, and ideologically opposed activists as well as shared concerns about immigration from predominantly Muslim countries and the security of the US-Mexico border. In rare instances, MVEs and other DVEs have tried to collaborate with individuals whom they believe to be associated with foreign terrorist organizations, but MVE concerns about countering perceived foreign threats and perceived dangers from US-based Muslims generally limit this sort of activity.

**(U) Monikers and Themes:**

**(U) Three Percenters (III%ers):** MVEs sometimes call themselves “III%ers,” based on the belief that only 3 percent of American colonists took up arms against the British Government during the Revolutionary War. III%ers regard the present-day US Government as analogous to the British monarchy during the 18th century in terms of its infringements on civil liberties. The term generally represents the perception that a small force with a just cause can overthrow a tyrannical government if armed and prepared. Although many independent and multi-state militia organizations incorporate III% references into their unit names, the term is less indicative of membership in an overarching group than representative of a common belief in the notion that a small force can overthrow a tyrannical government if armed and prepared. Self-identification as a III%er or use of III% symbols should not independently be considered evidence of militia affiliation or illegal activity.

**(U) Boogaloo:** The meme and moniker “boogaloo” entered the mainstream in 1984 with the film *Breakin’ 2: Electric Boogaloo*.<sup>c</sup> Some MVEs adopted the meme to reference a perceived impending politically motivated

civil war or uprising against the US Government. Since early 2020, some MVEs and other DVEs have referenced the meme in their real-world criminal activities. Adherents sometimes use coded imagery and symbols referencing “big igloo” or “big luau,” wear attire with the image of an igloo, and don Hawaiian-print shirts and leis. Self-identification as a boogaloo adherent or use of boogaloo symbols, however, should not be independently considered evidence of belief in MVE ideology or illegal activity.

**(U//FOUO) Radicalization:** The strength and influence of the radicalization factors below vary from person to person, and for militia extremism may include the following:

- **(U//FOUO) Personal factors**, such as the fear of being targeted by the government or having constitutional rights taken away, can instill a desire to protect those freedoms.
- **(U//FOUO) Group factors**, such as those involving in-person and online social networks, can instill a desire to belong or conform to a group with shared goals that uses violence for political gain, such as protection of gun rights.
- **(U//FOUO) Community factors** may include social environments that create perceptions that individual freedoms are impeded.
- **(U//FOUO) Ideological factors** provide the narratives and terminology that shape the world views of individuals who are anti-government and other ideologically motivated populations.
- **(U//FOUO) Sociopolitical factors** include collective grievances, such as the perceived threat of government overreach.

<sup>b</sup>(U) FBI defines *sovereign citizens* as US citizens who claim to have special knowledge or heritage that renders them immune from government authority and laws. Although the ideology, itself, is not illegal, sovereign citizen extremists express their ideology through force or violence; sovereign citizen criminals use their beliefs to justify nonviolent fraud or theft.

<sup>c</sup>(U//FOUO) *Breakin’ 2: Electric Boogaloo* did not contain content about a politically motivated civil war in the US.

# (U) Notable Militia Violent Extremist Events and Threats

**(U) 19 APR 1995**

(U) Timothy McVeigh targets a Federal building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, to advance his antigovernment violent extremist agenda. McVeigh uses a VBIED, causing the deaths of 168 people and injuring several hundred others. McVeigh was found guilty of state and Federal offenses, including the use of weapons of mass destruction, and sentenced to death. His accomplice, Terry Nichols, was convicted and sentenced to life in prison for his role in the plot. McVeigh was executed by lethal injection on 11 June 2001 at the Federal Correctional Complex in Terre Haute, Indiana.

1995

1997

**(U) 4 JUL 1997**

(U) Two MVEs who believed that foreign troops were training at US military bases to take over the United States are arrested on their way to Fort Hood, Texas, which they planned to attack the next day. The pair had multiple firearms, night-vision equipment, and ballistic vests. Both were convicted and sentenced to five years in Federal prison. Eight others were convicted for their roles in providing support to the plot.

**(U) 5 DEC 1999**

(U) Three MVEs are arrested for conspiring to blow up a liquid propane storage complex in Elk Grove, California, believing that the action would prompt the government to declare martial law and provoke a rebellion. Two plotters were convicted in 2002 and received 22- and 24-year sentences in Federal prison. The third pleaded guilty and received a five-year sentence in Federal prison.

1999

2011

**(U) 1 NOV 2011**

(U) Four MVEs are arrested for conspiring to attack city centers, including those in Atlanta, Georgia; and government personnel, including employees of the Internal Revenue Service; with explosives, biological toxins, and firearms. Two pleaded guilty to charges related to possession of an unregistered explosive device and a silencer and were sentenced to five years in Federal prison. The other two were convicted of possession and production of a biological toxin for use as a weapon and received sentences of 10 years in Federal prison.

**(U) 13 MAR 2018**

(U) The FBI arrests a group of MVEs who conducted an IED attack on a Minnesota mosque in August 2017 in order to “scare” Muslims and effect their departure from the country. The MVEs allegedly also tried to bomb a reproductive health care facility in Illinois in November 2017 and engaged in other criminal activities. Two MVEs pleaded guilty to charges related to their role in the bombing, and the leader was convicted on multiple Federal charges related to his role in the attack.

2018

2019

**(U) APR & JUN 2019**

(U) The FBI and law enforcement partners arrest two MVEs who led others in detaining undocumented migrants along the US-Mexico border in New Mexico. One MVE pleaded guilty to a felony charge of possession of a firearm, and the other was convicted for impersonating a border patrol agent.

**(U) 12 APR 2014**

(U) MVEs engage in an armed confrontation with the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and law enforcement officers near Bunkerville, Nevada, after a BLM operation to remove cattle trespassing on Federal land. Law enforcement officials suspended the operation and withdrew their officers to prevent the situation from turning violent.

2014

**(U) OCT 2016**

(U) The FBI and law enforcement partners arrest three MVEs who are planning to conduct IED attacks at an apartment complex in Garden City, Kansas, where Muslim immigrants from Somalia live and worship. The three were convicted on Federal charges and received sentences of 25 to 30 years imprisonment.

2017

**(U) JAN - 11 FEB 2016**

(U) MVEs and sovereign citizen violent extremists conduct an illegal 41-day occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Burns, Oregon, to draw attention to their objections to Federal policies related to the use of public lands. The occupation culminates in the arrests of several individuals and the shooting death of occupier Robert LaVoy Finicum during a confrontation with law enforcement on 26 January. The remaining extremists evacuated the refuge or surrendered to authorities by 11 February.

2016

**(U) 12 AUG 2017**

(U) The FBI arrests an MVE on Federal charges of plotting a VBIED attack against a bank in Oklahoma City. The MVE initially wanted to blow up the Federal Reserve Building in Washington, DC, using a similar method as that used in the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing. The MVE was convicted for attempted use of a weapon of mass destruction and sentenced to 25 years of imprisonment.

**(U) 12 MAR 2020**

(U) Authorities in Maryland fatally shoot Duncan Lemp during a raid in Potomac, Maryland. Lemp had associated with the III%ers and had posted a photo the week before that made reference to the boogaloo. Since then, MVE boogaloo adherents have referenced Lemp in online forums popular with MVEs as a source of inspiration or as justification for inciting violence.

2020

**(U) 6 JUN 2020**

(U) Local law enforcement in Santa Cruz County, California, arrest a US Air Force sergeant for allegedly killing a Sheriff's Office sergeant and wounding a deputy who were responding to a report of a suspicious vehicle containing ammunition, firearms, and bombmaking materials. Before his arrest, the DVE reportedly wrote "BOOG" in blood on the trunk of a vehicle he carjacked. The DVE owned a tactical vest bearing a patch with an igloo and a Hawaiian-style print consistent with boogaloo imagery. Further FBI investigation identified the DVE and an accomplice as the alleged perpetrators of the shootings of two Federal security officers in Oakland on 29 May 2020 that resulted in the death of one of the officers.

## (U) CAPABILITIES AND TACTICS

**(U//FOUO) Weapons/Equipment:** MVEs who mobilize to violence have most often used firearms, including automatic weapons and illegally modified firearms. MVEs have also used improvised incendiary devices, IEDs, and VBIEDs in their attacks. Many MVEs, seeking to avoid generating documentation related to their ownership of firearms, acquire their guns through private sales or manufacturing.

**(U//FOUO) Tactics:** MVEs are typically involved in groups that are often organized in hierarchical structures similar to those of the US military. Group sizes vary, ranging from several to dozens of members. Some organizations have a national presence, while others are organized on a state or regional basis. Militia groups are dynamic, regularly undergo name changes, and often expand and splinter into factions. MVEs engage in operational security practices to avoid law enforcement detection or scrutiny and sometimes conduct preoperational surveillance or dry runs before conducting attacks.

**(U//FOUO) Recruitment/Training:** MVEs typically recruit members on the Internet, by word of mouth, and at places where potentially like-minded individuals gather, such as gun shows and rallies. Some enlist only family and close friends, while others require background checks and interviews. Some MVEs focus on recruiting current and former law enforcement and military personnel with weapons skills, potential access to restricted intelligence databases, and tactical training. MVEs often conduct paramilitary training modeled on US military tactics to enhance their proficiency in assault tactics, marksmanship, first aid, and other combat-related disciplines.

**(U//FOUO) Use of the Internet:** MVEs often have public and private social media accounts, online groups, and

websites that provide information on coming events. Some MVEs use online platforms to make calls for action or requests for assistance. Many MVEs use militia-oriented forums and encrypted applications to discuss their activities and share tradecraft. Some MVEs who have personal knowledge of, or experience with, firearms sometimes use the Internet and social media to obtain or share instructions on manufacturing or modifying firearms and on constructing IEDs, such as pipe bombs.

## (U) PROMINENT FIGURES

(U//FOUO) Although leaders exist within the militia community, MVEs generally do not follow enduring ideologies but refer to perceived martyrs whom they believe were unlawfully targeted by law enforcement or the US Government. Some MVEs look to the deaths of Duncan Lemp and LaVoy Finicum for inspiration or justification for inciting violence.

## (U) POTENTIAL FUTURE FLASHPOINTS

- **(U//FOUO) COVID-19–related restrictions:** MVEs may use COVID-19 restrictions to radicalize and mobilize supporters.
- **(U//FOUO) Lawful protests:** MVEs may use lawful protests to target those associated with civil rights efforts or movements that they view as threats. MVEs sometimes pose a threat to people in these contexts whom they believe to be rioters, looters, or law enforcement officials.
- **(U//FOUO) National- or state-level gun control legislation:** MVEs may cite gun control legislation that they perceive as infringing on Second Amendment rights to radicalize supporters or conduct criminal or violent activity.
- **(U//FOUO) Attempts to enforce Federal land or water regulations:** MVEs

may contest government-owned land and incite confrontations regarding citizens' rights to public lands that could lead to illegal occupations and armed standoffs.

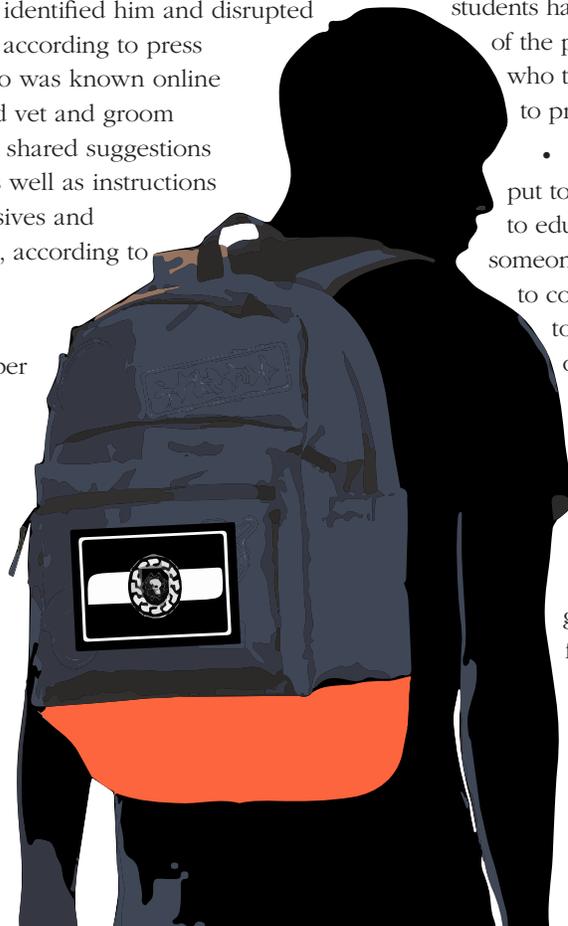
- **(U//FOUO) Immigration trends, legislation, and enforcement actions:** MVEs may use perceived relaxed immigration policies to recruit or radicalize supporters. Some MVEs target specific populations that they deem pose a danger to the welfare and security of the United States, such as Muslims and refugees from predominantly Muslim countries—whom they view as cultural or terrorist threats—and suspected drug traffickers or undocumented immigrants from Latin America.
- **(U//FOUO) Attacks by DVEs:** MVEs may be inspired to mobilize to violence by other DVEs' attacks in an attempt to support shared interests, retaliate for the attacks by ideologically opposed DVEs, or emulate a successful attacker.
- **(U//FOUO) Responses to homegrown violent extremist (HVE) or international terrorist attacks in the Homeland or both:** MVEs may radicalize supporters and use HVE or international terrorist attacks as justification to conduct MVE attacks on Muslims, immigrants from predominantly Muslim countries, or associated religious and cultural centers.
- **(U//FOUO) Elections:** MVEs may incite violence based on local, state, and Federal election results that they believe put them at a disadvantage, or they may exploit lawful protests surrounding election-related activities to justify and conduct opportunistic attacks. 

(U//FOUO)

# MINORS PLAYING PROMINENT ROLES IN US AND EUROPEAN RMVE ACTIVITY

(U//FOUO) Minors<sup>a</sup> in the United States and Europe are actively participating in racially or ethnically motivated violent extremist (RMVE) groups, including by conducting attacks, underscoring the susceptibility of some youths to extremist messaging. Some minors are probably attracted to RMVE groups and ideology that provide a sense of identity and inclusion, an opportunity to rebel against authority, and an outlet for violent tendencies. US and European teenagers also can take advantage of the decentralized, Internet-based nature of many RMVE groups that allow minors to misrepresent their ages, experiences, and international connections and, sometimes, to play prominent roles in the groups.

- (U) A 17-year-old boy in New Hampshire, allegedly a member of RMVE groups The Base and Feuerkrieg Division (FKD), had been, as of April 2020, trying to spearhead a new online RMVE organization, according to FBI reporting.
- (U) A 13-year-old boy in Estonia served as the leader of FKD until authorities identified him and disrupted his activities in January, according to press reporting. The teen, who was known online as “Commander,” helped vet and groom new FKD members and shared suggestions for tactics and targets as well as instructions for producing C4 explosives and homemade ammunition, according to press reporting.
- (U//FOUO) A probably Swedish teenaged member of an RMVE group claimed responsibility for an arson attack on a mink farm in October 2019 and uploaded a video of the attack to iFunny, a meme-sharing website popular with teenagers, according to press reporting. The individual also posted recipes for explosives on his account.



- (U) In March 2019, British authorities arrested a 16-year-old boy for publishing a manifesto in which he discussed bombing synagogues and other targets during a coming “race war,” according to press reporting. The teen had been interested in extremist ideologies, including the neo-Nazi and Satanist group Order of the Nine Angles, since he was 13, and he was active on fascist websites and forums, according to press reporting. In January 2020, he became the youngest RMVE to be convicted of planning a terror attack in the UK, according to press reporting.

(U//FOUO) In the United States, enhancing terrorism prevention outreach with schools and improving educators’ awareness of RMVE iconography, ideology, and common indicators of mobilization to violence—potentially in concert with local nonprofit groups—would probably increase their ability to identify vulnerable students and intervene alongside families, social workers, and law enforcement officials. In at least one recent incident, students and teachers notified law enforcement about a minor student’s extremist beliefs and preparations to engage in violence, helping to prevent an attack.

- (U) In November 2019, local law enforcement in Georgia arrested and charged a 16-year-old girl with plotting to kill worshippers at an African-American church. Fellow students had discovered a notebook containing details of the plot and passed it to school administrators, who then contacted law enforcement, according to press reporting.
- (U) A US-based nonprofit organization put together a toolkit for schools to use to educate teachers about indicators that someone is adopting RMVE ideology and ways to counter extremist influences, according to press reporting. A US-based anti-hate organization also has developed training for educators and students on RMVE ideology and messaging that is part of its broader violence-prevention programs.
- (U) The founder of a US-based nonprofit organization that assists individuals seeking to leave RMVE groups noted an increase in requests for assistance from parents of teens and young adults after RMVE-inspired attacks, including the shooting at a store in El Paso in August 2019, according to press reporting. 

<sup>a</sup>(U//FOUO) Minors in this context refers to individuals under the full age of responsibility in the United States, which means those 17 years old or younger.

(U//FOUO)  
**RMVES** USING  
VARIETY OF  
**ONLINE**  
**PLATFORMS**  
FOR **VIOLENT**  
**EXTREMIST**  
ACTIVITY

Social Media



Facebook



Instagram



Twitch



Discord



Reddit



Telegram



Vkontakte



YouTube



Twitter

(U//FOUO) Racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists<sup>a</sup> (RMVEs) are using numerous mainstream social media platforms, smaller sites with targeted audiences, and chat applications to disseminate materials that contribute to radicalization and mobilization to violence. Social media sites provide access to a large audience for recruitment, inspiration to commit violence, and mainstream attention, although audience-specific sites offer an opportunity for like-minded people to galvanize each other's radicalization, and messaging applications enable private discussions.

(U//FOUO) Technology companies that are willing to counter terrorist activity online but lack extensive resources to monitor content or automated takedown mechanisms would benefit from expanded US Government and NGO information sharing to identify how RMVEs are using their platforms. 

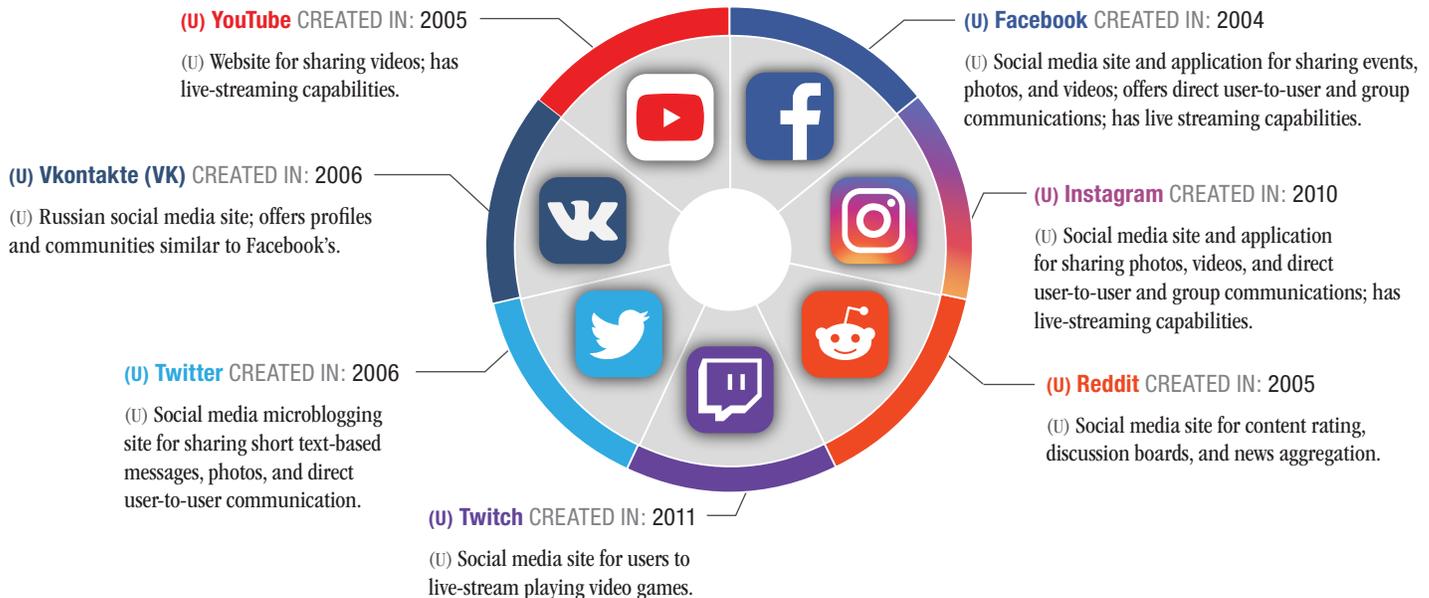
<sup>a</sup>(U//FOUO) RMVEs are individuals who use unlawful threats of force or violence in furtherance of political and/or social agendas that are deemed to derive from bias, often related to race or ethnicity, held by the actor against others, including a given population group.

<sup>b</sup>(U) Individuals usually have accounts on multiple online platforms; this is not an exhaustive list of platforms that RMVEs have used.

# (U) ONLINE PLATFORMS RMVES HAVE USED<sup>b</sup>

## (U) Mainstream Social Media

### (U) PLATFORM<sup>c</sup> AND KEY FEATURES



#### (U) TERMS OF SERVICE (TOS)/COMMUNITY GUIDELINES



(U) Reserves the right to remove accounts and content that depict criminal activity; encourage physical or emotional harm; incite serious violence; or promote terrorism, organized hate, or mass or serial murder; also takes automated actions on TOS violations.



(U) Similar to parent company Facebook, reserves the right to remove content containing obscene, offensive, threatening, unlawful, or otherwise objectionable material; takes automated actions on TOS violations.



(U) Prohibits content that encourages or incites violence, harasses or threatens others, and violates US laws.



(U) Prohibits content that violates US laws and depicts acts or threats of violence, harassment, or hateful conduct.



(U) Reserves the right to remove content that depicts graphic violence, promotes terrorism or hate speech, or threatens violence; takes automated actions on TOS violations.



(U) Reserves the right but is not obliged to check its site for prohibited content; can remove any content or users that reference extremist materials or promote fascism or racial superiority.



(U) Prohibits hate speech, graphic violence, malicious attacks, predatory behavior, and other content that promotes harmful or dangerous behavior; takes automated actions on TOS violations.

#### (U) EXAMPLE OF VIOLENT EXTREMIST USE

(U) **Brenton Tarrant**, who attacked two New Zealand mosques in March 2019, posted a live video of the attack on Facebook, where 1.5 million copies were distributed and subsequently removed. In June 2019, Tarrant pleaded not guilty to murder, attempted murder, and terrorism charges. He was sentenced in August 2020 to life in prison with the possibility of parole.

(U) An unidentified Instagram user posted logos for Combat 18—the militarized branch of the transnational RMVE organization Blood & Honour—on 24 and 25 September 2019 with the captions “Combat 18, whatever it takes” and “Fight with us, win with us, Combat 18.”

(U//FOUO) **James Jackson**<sup>USPER</sup>—who stabbed to death a homeless African American man in New York City in March 2017—conducted Reddit searches on “white rights” and claimed that the white race was superior. In March 2019, Jackson was sentenced to life in prison without parole.

(U) **Stephan Balliet**—who attacked a synagogue and kebab stall in Halle, Germany, in October 2019—live-streamed his attack on Twitch; 2,200 users viewed the archived video on Twitch, and thousands of others viewed the video as it was shared on other platforms. Balliet was charged with several counts of murder and attempted murder.

(U) **James Fields Jr.**<sup>USPER</sup>—who attacked protesters with his car in Charlottesville, Virginia, in August 2017—used Twitter to follow at least one RMVE group he intended to meet in Charlottesville. In June 2019, Fields was sentenced to life in prison.

(U) VK hosts a group named “A.A.” that has called for attacks against Jews, LGBTQ communities, and minorities.

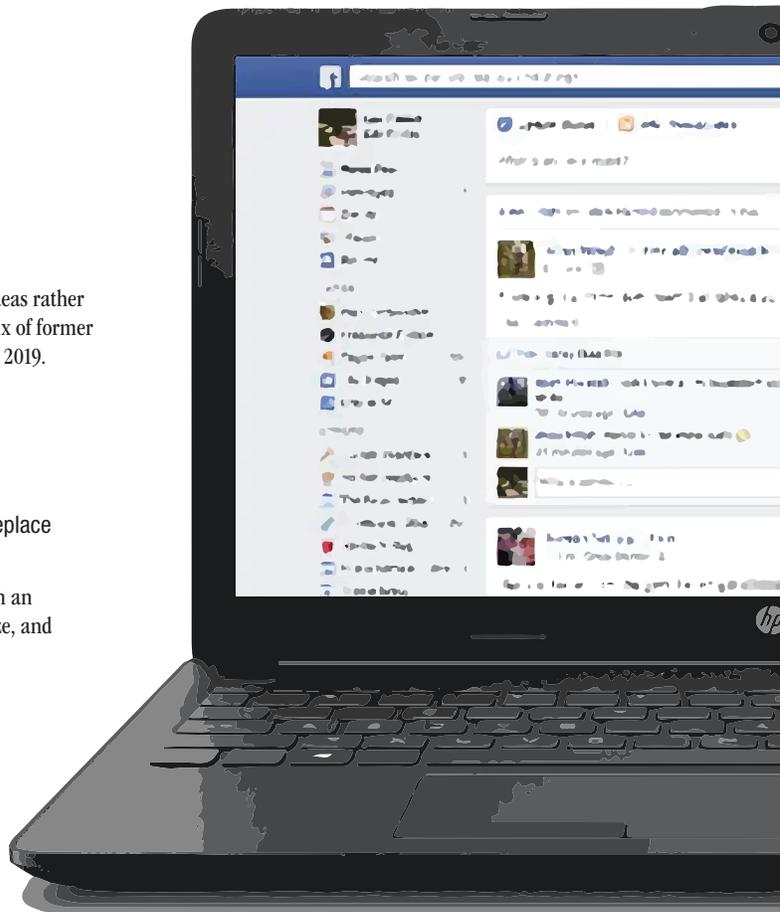
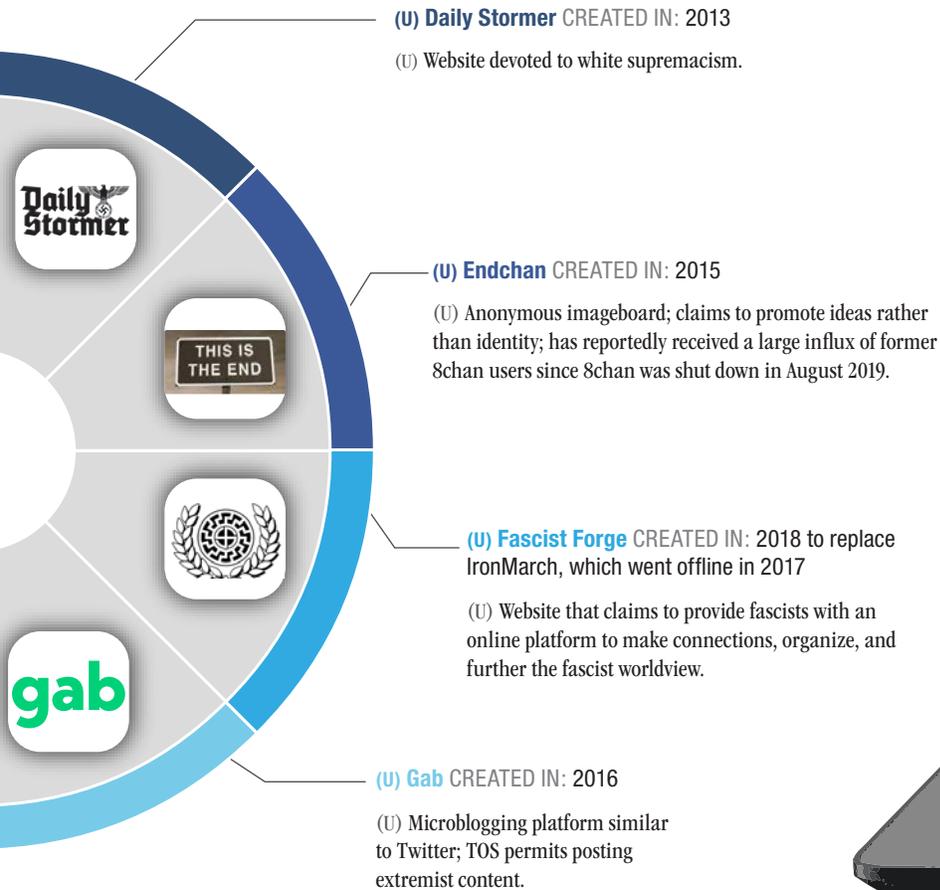
(U) **Gavin Long**<sup>USPER</sup>—who attacked police in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in July 2017—posted videos on calling for violence as the solution to African-American oppression. Long was killed by responding officers.

<sup>b</sup>(U) The use of these online platforms does not necessarily mean that a person is engaged in criminal or terrorist activities, and all of the applications listed in this chart can be used in a legitimate and legal manner. Not all violent ideological content on social media is illegal in the United States, given First Amendment protections; however, violent content violates most platforms’ terms of service, allowing companies to take action.

(U) ONLINE PLATFORMS RMVES HAVE USED<sup>b</sup>

## (U) Alternative Audience-Specific Platforms

### (U) PLATFORM<sup>c</sup> AND KEY FEATURES



#### (U) TERMS OF SERVICE (TOS)/COMMUNITY GUIDELINES



(U) Prohibits posts that advocate violence.



(U) Prohibits posts that violate US law, contain suggestive audio/visual content of children, and include spam.



(U) Does not outline specific TOS but notes that it does not tolerate anything that opposes a fascist worldview.



(U) Users agree to refrain from producing content that threatens others or incites imminent lawless action; notes that controversial or offensive speech will not be removed.

#### (U) EXAMPLE OF VIOLENT EXTREMIST USE

(U) **Dylann Roof**—who killed nine people at a church in Charleston, South Carolina, in June 2015—used his Daily Stormer account to promote white supremacy. In January 2017, Roof was sentenced to death.

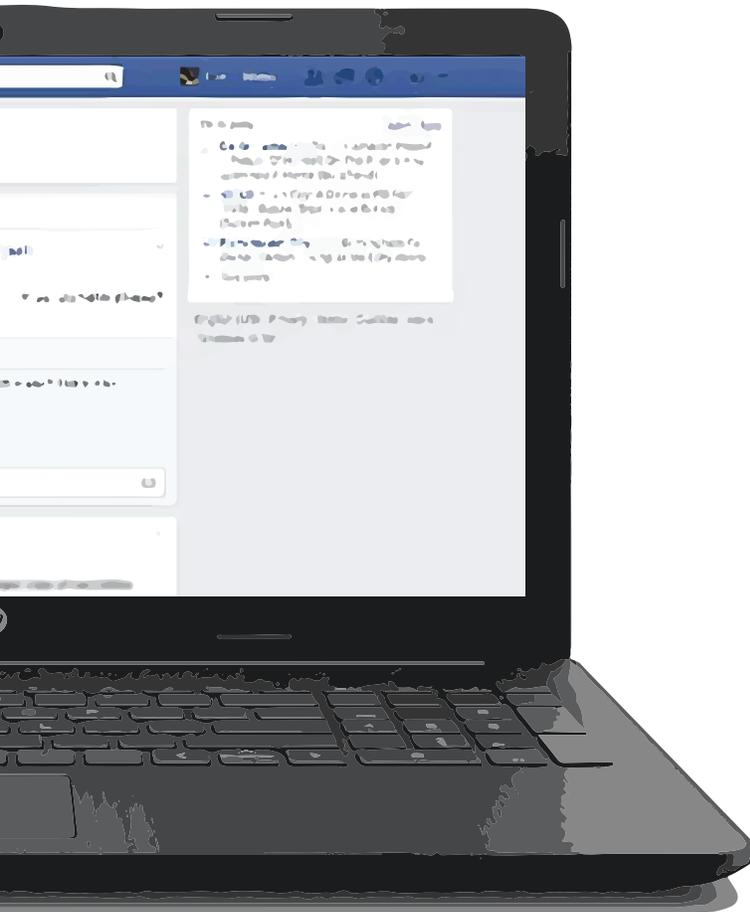
(U//FOUO) **Phillip Manshaus**—who attacked the Al-Noor mosque in Oslo, Norway, in August 2019—posted on Endchan that the attacks in El Paso, Texas, and Christchurch, New Zealand, had inspired him to act. In June 2020, Manshaus received a 21-year sentence.

(U) A teenager in Durham, UK—who was sentenced to six years and eight months in prison in January 2020 for plotting to attack synagogues and other buildings—was a regular contributor to Fascist Forge, including posting a manifesto with a list of targets, before his arrest in March 2019.

(U) A named US person—who allegedly killed 11 people at a synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania—made anti-Semitic and threatening posts on Gab. In January 2019, the alleged attacker was charged with Federal hate crimes and firearms offenses. As of April 2021, he was awaiting trial.

## (U) Alternative Audience-Specific Platforms

### (U) PLATFORM<sup>c</sup> AND KEY FEATURES



(U) **Neinchan** CREATED IN: 2019

(U) Imageboard website known for its neo-Nazi user base.

(U) **Stormfront** CREATED IN: 1996;  
available intermittently, as of January 2020

(U) Website containing forums on white supremacism.

(U) **4chan** CREATED IN: 2003

(U) Imageboard site known for protecting free speech and limited content moderation.

(U) **8kun** CREATED IN: 2019 as a replacement for 8chan, which was created in 2013 and intermittently available from August 2019 until relaunch as 8kun

(U) Imageboard site known for almost nonexistent content moderation, making it a safe haven for extremist users and leading to it being temporarily taken down in August 2019.



#### (U) TERMS OF SERVICE (TOS)/COMMUNITY GUIDELINES



(U) Has one global rule banning pornography; administrators for boards can create their own rules.



(U) Prohibits posts that violate US law or promote hate against other white nationalities.



(U) Prohibits posts that violate US laws; individual message boards often have their own rules.



(U) Prohibits posts that violate US laws.

#### (U) EXAMPLE OF VIOLENT EXTREMIST USE

(U//FOUO) An anonymous user called for attacks against the US Congress and US Government buildings in August 2019.

(U) **Roof** used his Stormfront account to promote white-supremacist extremist views.

(U) **Manshaus** posted to 4chan hours before his attack—with the same username from Endchan—that he was elected by, and called for, his followers to enact a race war.

(U//FOUO) A named US person—who allegedly killed 22 people at a store in El Paso, Texas, in August 2019—posted his manifesto to 8chan. As of April 2021, the person was awaiting trial on capital murder charges.

(U) ONLINE PLATFORMS RMVES HAVE USED<sup>b</sup>

**(U) Chat Applications**  
(U) PLATFORM<sup>c</sup> AND KEY FEATURES

(U) **Wire** CREATED IN: 2014

(U) Offers default end-to-end encrypted messaging for sending files, screenshots, texts, and videos—including video conferences—and voice calls; collaborative platform.

(U) **Discord** CREATED IN: 2015

(U//FOUO) Offers link encryption for files, texts, and voice calls for point-to-point and group messaging; tailored for gamers.



(U) **Telegram** CREATED IN: 2013

(U) Offers end-to-end encrypted messaging for sending files, texts, videos, and voice calls; has an optional self-destruct feature.

(U) TERMS OF SERVICE (TOS)/COMMUNITY GUIDELINES



(U) Reserves the right to remove content that celebrates violence, directly threatens someone's safety, or includes illegal action.

(U) EXAMPLE OF VIOLENT EXTREMIST USE

(U//FOUO) A named US person—who allegedly killed one person in Orange Country, California, in January 2018—used Discord to chat with fellow members of the violent neo-Nazi group Atomwaffen Division. He has been charged at the state level with murder and a hate-crime enhancement. As of April 2021, he was awaiting trial.



(U) Prohibits posts that promote violence and contain illegal pornographic content on publicly viewable channels and bots.

(U//FOUO) The user of a Telegram channel affiliated with the Feuerkrieg Division, a transnational RMVE group, admitted to encouraging a Nevada-based US person's alleged plot against Jewish targets.



(U) Reserves the right to disable any account that includes unlawful, hateful, or racially or ethnically offensive content.

(U) Wire accounts affiliated with Feuerkrieg Division members have received online funding directly from users who support their content, which espouses ideology consistent with various RMVEs.

# (U//FOUO) DVES EXPLOITING **PROMINENT ART** **AND MEME SITES** TO PROMOTE VIOLENCE AND DISSEMINATE MESSAGING

(U//FOUO) Some domestic violent extremists (DVEs) are using meme-sharing and artwork websites that are popular with teenagers and could probably be used to promote violence and spread extremist content. Since at least 2014, DVEs—mostly racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists (RMVEs) and militia violent extremists (MVEs)—have used the meme- and photo-sharing site iFunny and the artwork repository DeviantArt to share extremist messaging and recruit individuals, potentially to engage in violence. DVE content posted on these sites, much of which uses imagery and humor to convey violent extremist ideology, has been viewed

by tens of thousands of followers and gets reposted to mainstream social media platforms or image board sites popular with DVE actors.

## (U) **WHITE SUPREMACIST MEMES**

(U) On May 12, 2020, a 20-year-old Ohio-based MVE who had used an iFunny account for recruitment was arrested on charges related to a plot to kill police officers responding to a false distress call. The individual's preoperational planning reportedly involved making a hoax distress call from a national park to gauge park rangers' response times.

(U) An 18-year-old in Ohio pleaded guilty to threatening law enforcement officers in December 2019 after

posting threats to shoot Federal agents on his iFunny account, which had more than 5,000 subscribers and advocated violence in furtherance of DVE ideologies. Law enforcement officers seized 25 firearms from the teen's home, and after his arrest, other iFunny users posted memes hailing him as an icon of the online community and began labeling their posts as satirical to avoid arrest.

(U) A US person arrested in February 2015 for plotting to attack a mall in Halifax, Nova Scotia, claimed on a podcast in 2019 to have begun supporting RMVE ideology after seeing extremist messaging on DeviantArt when she was 16 years old. After viewing the messaging on this platform, she began to produce ideologically charged content. **A**



<sup>3</sup>(U//FOUO) DVEs are individuals based and operating primarily within the United States or its territories without direction or inspiration from a foreign terrorist group or other foreign power who seek to further political or social goals wholly or in part through unlawful acts of force or violence. The mere advocacy of political or social positions, political activism, use of strong rhetoric, or generalized philosophic embrace of violent tactics may not constitute extremism and may be constitutionally protected.

(U//FOUO)

# VARIED RMVE INFLUENCES RESULT IN THEMATIC BUT DIVERSE TARGETING

(U//FOUO) Multiple and commonly recurring topics influence racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists<sup>3</sup> (RMVEs), resulting in varied target selections that fall into several general themes. RMVEs lack a central authority that regulates a systemized ideology and construct personalized frameworks for grievances, as evidenced in attackers citing disparate grievances justifying lethal attacks. RMVEs are often motivated by several themes simultaneously and can disagree with others' prioritization and characterization of these themes, as well.

**(U//FOUO) ANTI-IMMIGRANT:** Some RMVEs focus on immigrant populations, intimidating immigrant communities and trying to reverse migration patterns. Brenton Tarrant attacked two mosques in March 2019 in Christchurch, New Zealand, to deter “invaders” from cultures with higher birthrates from entering “white” countries, according to his manifesto.

**(U//FOUO) ANTI-RACIAL MINORITY:** Some RMVEs target racial minorities with threats or violence

based on their conception of the white race as being superior to others; others advocate for the separation of the races based on the same racial biases. In June 2015, Dylann Roof killed nine African-Americans in a predominately African-American church in Charleston, South Carolina, and claimed to have selected the city based on its historical significance and prominent African-American community.

**(U//FOUO) ANTI-GOVERNMENT/MULTICULTURALISM:** RMVE rhetoric has blamed governments and political leaders for changing the demographic makeup of historically white countries and diluting orthodox Christian practices. Anders Breivik—who killed 77 children and government workers in Norway in 2011—claimed to be resisting “cultural Marxists” and emphasized in his manifesto the need to target mainstream and leftist political parties. RMVEs also believe that the government is partially responsible for facilitating Jewish influence over the global economy and political sphere.



(U//FOUO) Antipodean Resistance flag



(U//FOUO) Combat 18 banner

<sup>3</sup>(U//FOUO) In this article, *RMVE* is used for extremists who see themselves as part of a white or European civilization—often perceived as superior—that is under attack from external and internal foes and in need of violent action.

**(U//FOUO) ANTI-SEMITISM:** RMVEs often target Jewish communities and justify violence using conspiracy theories about secret Jewish control of government and economic institutions to oppress non-Jewish, white populations. Stefan Balliet, who tried to attack a synagogue in Halle, Germany, on Yom Kippur in October 2019, advocated attacking Jewish targets to oppose a “Zionist-occupied government.”

**(U//FOUO) PERCEIVED “RACE TRAITORS”:** RMVEs cite grievances against political enemies—including those who are white, such as people who promote LGBTQ rights, counterprotesters, and pro-“race mixing” views—that have led to sporadic low-level RMVE attacks and calls for violence. In 2017, James Fields Jr. killed one person and injured 28 in an attack against counterprotesters at the “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, Virginia.

(U//FOUO) RMVE ideology also draws inspiration from influences far removed from mainstream political or popular thought. Current RMVEs borrow from or gravitate toward ancient Germanic culture, fringe strains of Eastern religious thought, neo-Pagan traditions, and Satanism, largely because Germany’s Nazi Party used these symbols in the 1920s to 1940s. The historical predominance of Christianity in Europe also has greatly influenced RMVE rhetoric.

(U//FOUO) RMVE groups feature symbols heavily from the ancient Germanic runic alphabet and Germanic paganism, probably because a mythologized Germanic

culture for European civilization plays a prominent role in RMVE ideology.

(U//FOUO) The logos of some RMVE groups, such as Antipodean Resistance, Blood and Honour, Feuerkrieg Division, and Sonnenkrieg Division, include swastika-like symbols that Nazi leaders appropriated from Asian and European traditions dating to antiquity. Feuerkrieg Division has used social media to spread the ideas of a 20th-century ideologue who pioneered neo-Nazi interest in occultism and claimed that Hitler was an incarnation of the Hindu god Vishnu.

(U//FOUO) In his manifesto, Breivik claimed to belong to a reconstituted version of the Knights Templar, a Catholic military order that existed from the 12th through the 14th centuries. Tarrant claimed that Europe would reclaim the Turkish city of Constantinople, referring to Istanbul by its pre-Ottoman name. 



(U//FOUO) Feuerkrieg Division flag



(U//FOUO) Antipodean Resistance flag



(U//FOUO) Blood and Honour banner

(U//FOUO)

# PERSISTENT TARGETING OF HOUSES OF WORSHIP BY US VIOLENT EXTREMISTS

(U//FOUO) US-based violent extremists have persistently targeted houses of worship and religious facilities and will probably continue to do so because these types of attacks are advocated in extremist messaging, they receive amplified public attention, and their locations have been easy to access. FBI and NCTC identified 138 cases from 2014 to 2019 in which the subject of an eventual FBI terrorism or hate crime investigation targeted a US religious institution—five lethal attacks and 32 disrupted plots—figures that exclude incidents

investigated at state and local levels<sup>a</sup> only. Lethal attacks occurred in five of the years from 2014 to 2019, and 15 of the 25 fatalities (60 percent) took place at Jewish facilities. Christian churches were targeted most often, 54 times, of which, 21 churches (39 percent) were targeted because of their predominantly African-American membership. Identified or suspected racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists (RMVEs) or individuals motivated by religious discrimination<sup>b</sup> were responsible for 113 of the cases (82 percent). 



<sup>a</sup>(U//FOUO) There were other acts of vandalism or arson against religious facilities nationwide investigated solely by state and local law enforcement that did not meet FBI's threshold for opening a case. In 2018, law enforcement agencies nationwide voluntarily reported to the FBI through the Uniform Crime Reporting Program 263 alleged hate crimes at houses of worship, reflecting 3.7 percent of the 7,120 total reported hate crime incidents.

<sup>b</sup>(U//FOUO) "Individuals motivated by religious discrimination" refers to subjects of FBI hate crime investigations.

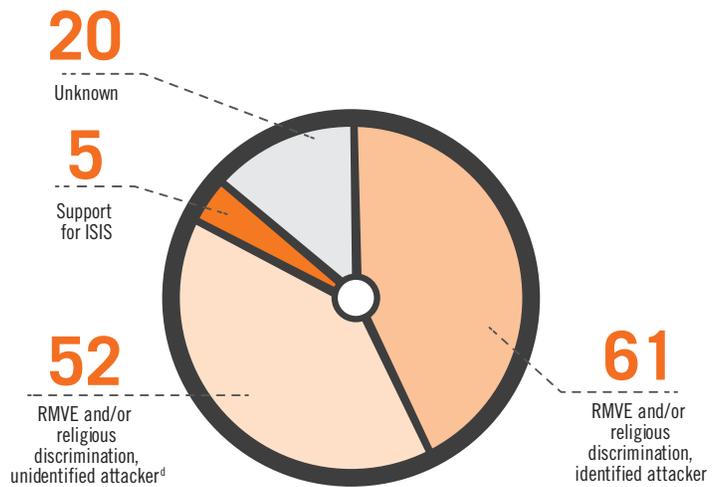
## SUCCESSFUL METHODS<sup>c</sup>



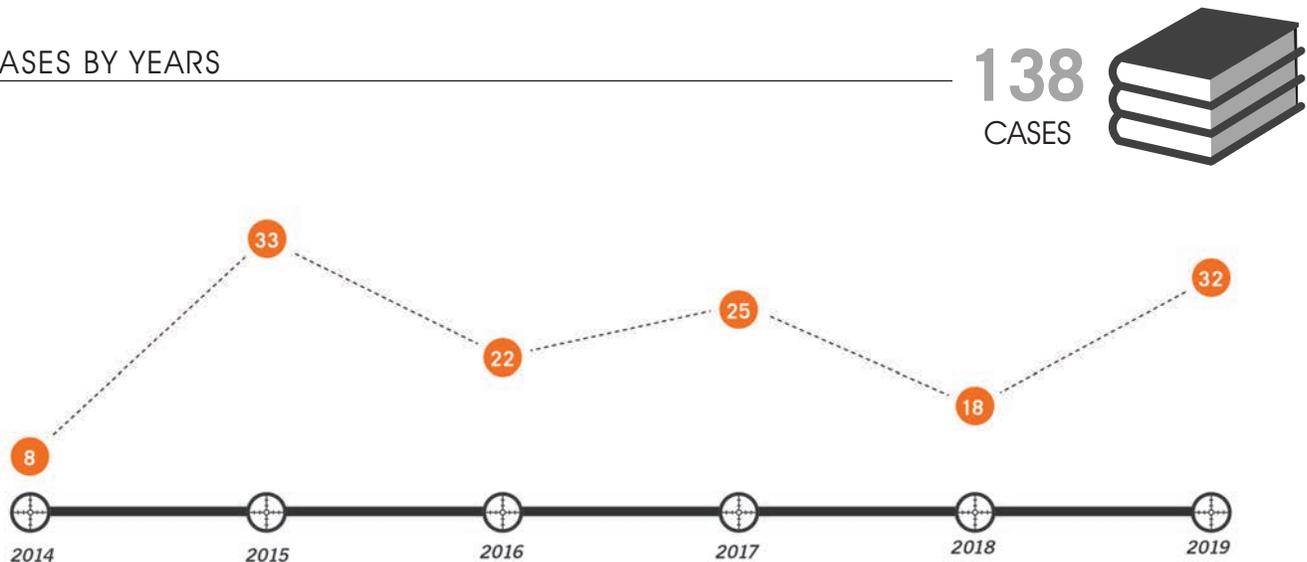
## TARGETED RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES



## MOTIVATIONAL DRIVERS



## CASES BY YEARS

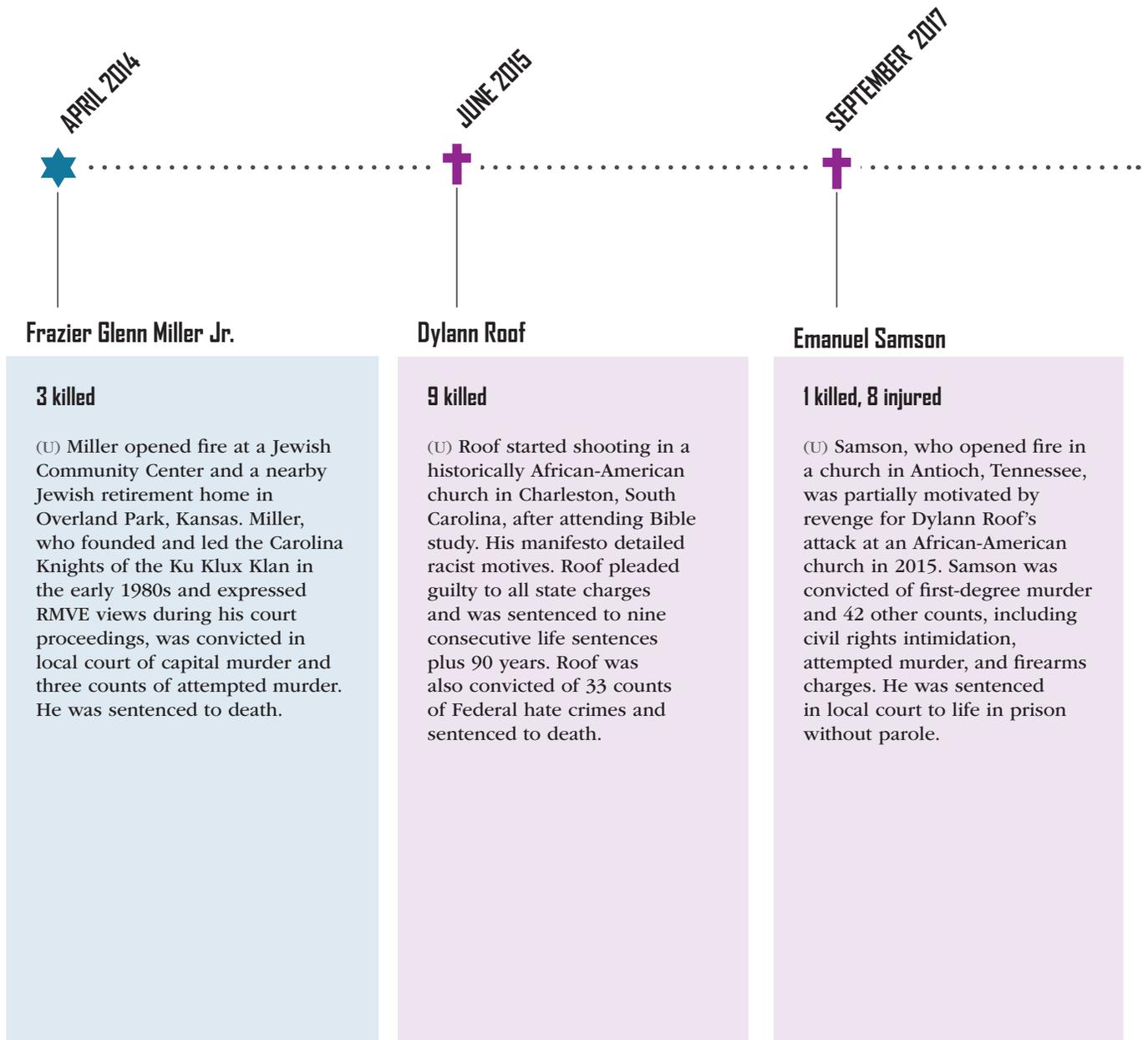


<sup>c</sup>(U//FOUO) In six of the 106 successful incidents, the subject engaged in multiple types of incidents.

<sup>d</sup>(U//FOUO) The motivation of the unidentified attackers is assumed based on the nature of the attack and target.



# (U) Lethal Attacks on Houses of Worship and Religious Facilities Since 2014



TARGET:  SYNAGOGUE/JEWISH CENTER  CHURCH

OCTOBER 2018



### Alleged Pittsburgh Shooter

**11 killed, 7 injured**

(U) The alleged shooter—whose profile on the social media site Gab contained the statement “jews are the children of satan”—entered a Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, synagogue with firearms and opened fire. He was charged in Federal court with 63 counts, including obstruction of the free exercise of religion resulting in death, use of a firearm to commit murder, and other hate crimes.

APRIL 2019



### Alleged Poway Shooter

**1 killed, 3 injured**

(U//FOUO) The alleged shooter opened fire on a synagogue in Poway, California, and wrote a manifesto that included anti-Semitic statements and his desire to have killed more people. Earnest also tried to burn down a mosque a month earlier, leaving a tribute in the parking lot to the New Zealand mosque attacker from March 2019, who killed 51 people and wounded 49 more. No one was injured in the attempted arson attack. He was charged in Federal court with hate crimes, damage to religious real property involving use of a dangerous weapon or fire, and using and carrying a firearm during and in relation to a crime of violence.

# (U//FOUO) OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE TERRORISM-PREVENTION EFFORTS BY APPLYING LESSONS LEARNED FROM OTHER TYPES OF PROGRAMMING

<sup>a</sup>(U) This product contains US person information that has been deemed necessary for the intended recipient to understand, assess, or act on the information provided. It has been highlighted in this document with the label USPER and should be handled in accordance with the recipient's intelligence oversight and information handling procedures.

<sup>b</sup>(U//FOUO) We selected the program types after a brainstorming session involving NCTC and DHS intelligence analysts and terrorism-prevention officials. These program types do not represent an exhaustive list of prevention programming categories that could be relevant to US terrorism-prevention efforts.

(U//FOUO) Local, state, and Federal terrorism-prevention efforts would probably benefit from applying lessons learned from non-terrorism-related community and social service programming in the United States, and, in some cases, the initiatives could be combined because they address risk factors—such as unmet psychological needs and a desire for adventure or a sense of purpose—that we have identified as being critical to terrorism prevention.<sup>abc</sup> Prevention programming not related to terrorism often focuses on areas relevant to terrorism prevention, such as conducting risk and threat assessments, performing tailored multidisciplinary interventions, promoting societal resilience and cohesion, and raising bystander awareness and increasing their likelihood to report. Combining terrorism- and nonterrorism-prevention programming would also probably help alleviate criticism that terrorism-prevention programming stigmatizes Muslims by primarily focusing on al-Qa'ida- and ISIS-inspired violence. 

## (U) NONTERRORISM-RELATED PREVENTION PROGRAMS

(U) These programs might have **broad applicability** because they offer many lessons learned and address similar risk factors. They could be combined or used in conjunction with existing terrorism-prevention efforts.

- (U) Antigang
- (U) Anti-hate/Anti-bias
- (U) Crisis-Intervention Teams
- (U) Online Safety
- (U) Recidivism Prevention
- (U) Targeted Violence

(U) These programs might have **limited applicability** because they offer some lessons learned for certain facets of terrorism prevention but often seek to address behaviors with largely different risk factors. These programs probably would not benefit from being combined with existing terrorism-prevention efforts.

- (U) Anti-bullying
- (U) Gun-Violence Prevention
- (U) Intimate-Partner and Sexual-Violence Prevention
- (U) Substance-Abuse Prevention
- (U) Suicide Prevention

<sup>c</sup>(U//FOUO) A specific prevention program's inclusion does not constitute US Government endorsement. Assessing program efficacy is outside the scope of this reference aid.



(U) **Antigang:** Programs focused on reducing gang crime and involvement, especially among youth, by encouraging community mobilization and social intervention and highlighting opportunities for educational and vocational advancements.

(U//FOUO) **Broad:** Anti-gang programs address the same root factors—such as searching for belonging and identity—that attract many individuals to join or support terrorist groups.

(U//FOUO) **Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.)<sup>USPER</sup>** is a school-based, law enforcement officer-instructed program that provides resiliency-building training to at-risk youth and their families to mitigate delinquency, gang activity, and violence.



(U) **Anti-hate/Anti-bias:** Programs designed to increase understanding of people’s differences and their value to a respectful and civil society and to actively challenge bias, stereotyping, and all forms of discrimination in schools and communities.

(U//FOUO) **Broad:** Anti-hate and anti-bias programs focus on building social cohesion, which counters the rhetoric that terrorist groups use to promulgate an “us versus them” mentality and to call for action against perceived enemies.

(U) **Stop the Hate<sup>USPER</sup>** supports preventing and combating hate, as well as fostering the development of community at the secondary education level. Stop the Hate educates colleges and universities on how to prevent hate crimes, manage freedom of speech and First Amendment issues, and acquire the tools to address bias-related incidents on campus.



(U) **Crisis Intervention Teams:** Local programs that prepare law enforcement officials to respond to mental health crises through education and coordination with mental health services.

(U) **Broad:** Information about violent extremists can be incorporated into lessons about how to respond to mental health calls, which probably would better equip law enforcement officials to identify a violent extremist who may have a mental health disorder.

(U) **Memphis Model Crisis Intervention Teams (CITs)** are a group of law enforcement officers who are trained on how to respond to calls when someone is having a mental health problem. CITs have reduced officer injuries when responding to mental health crises, decreased criminal charges filed against those with mental health disorders, and increased referrals to mental health professionals.

(U) **Online Safety:** Programs aimed at educating the public about how social media and the Internet work and their potential dangers.

(U) **Broad:** Online safety programming often includes lessons on common online acronyms and could be adapted to include symbols and platforms that violent extremists commonly use.

(U) **Internet Safety 101<sup>USPER</sup>** is primarily focused on educating parents through DVDs and virtual seminars about online predators, pornography, and the way children use social networking sites.



.....  
(U) **Recidivism Prevention:** Programs available throughout incarceration that address the core behavioral issues that result in criminality.

(U//FOUO) **Broad:** Terrorists eligible to be released from correctional facilities often benefit from the same rehabilitation and reintegration programs that nonextremist offenders frequently participate in.



(U) **Prison Entrepreneurship Program (PEP)<sup>USPER</sup>** works annually with 500 male inmates inside the Texas state prison system who are selected through a competitive application process. During incarceration, PEP participants receive extensive leadership and business skills training. Upon graduation and after release, PEP participants are provided with transition housing, transportation, counseling services, and emergency financial assistance.

(U) **Targeted Violence:** Programs aimed at developing threat assessments and response planning for targeted violence in schools, workplaces, or other venues.

(U) **Broad:** Programs that already address targeted violence can expand their curriculum to include content about extremist violence, such as that found in the “Homegrown Violent Extremist Mobilization Indicators” booklet from NCTC, FBI, and DHS.<sup>d</sup> Officers investigating individuals of concern can consider indicators or potential mobilization when developing management plans.



(U) **The Behavior Threat Assessment (BeTA) Unit** offers resources on targeted violence to houses of worship, law enforcement, and schools. The unit partners with local departments to investigate, develop threat assessments, and implement long-term management and mitigation plans tailored for individuals of concern who have demonstrated a motive and capability to conduct targeted violence.

<sup>d</sup>(U) The booklet is available at <https://go.usa.gov/xEKgd>



.....

(U) **Anti-Bullying:** Programs designed to assist in the prevention and mitigation of repeated and unwanted aggressive behavior of youth against other youth. Bullying can include physical or verbal aggression, the latter of which often occurs on social media or the Internet.

(U//FOUO) **Limited:** Some of the best practices for mitigating attempts at bullying also may be relevant to heightening resilience to violent extremists' attempts to recruit and radicalize.

(U) **Prince George's County Public Schools in Maryland** try to mitigate physical and cyberbullying by enabling victims to report bullying, by investigating the claims, and by hosting meetings with affected parties and school officials to discuss the investigation's findings and develop a support plan.



.....

(U) **Gun-Violence Prevention:** Programs are focused on reducing gun-related violence by advocating legislation, encouraging local communities to form advocacy organizations, highlighting survivors of gun violence, performing evidence-based research, and raising public awareness.

(U//FOUO) **Limited:** There most likely is overlap between some of the personal factors and mobilization indicators exhibited by ideologically and non-ideologically motivated attackers who use firearms.

(U) **Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence<sup>USPER</sup>** provides free technical assistance to advocates, citizens, law enforcement, lawmakers, and legal professionals who seek to make their communities safer from gun violence.

.....



(U) **Intimate-Partner and Sexual-Violence Prevention:**

Intimate-partner violence prevention focuses on violence and aggression that occurs in a close relationship and can include physical violence, sexual violence, stalking, and psychological aggression between current and former spouses, dating partners, and others. Sexual-violence prevention focuses on sexual activity when consent is not obtained or given freely.

(U//FOUO) **Limited:** Lessons learned from programs that increase community responsibility and bystander reporting could be applied to terrorism-prevention programs to increase reporting and the likelihood of early interventions.

(U) **Bringing in the Bystander<sup>USPER</sup>** typically works on college campuses to increase bystander awareness and expand an individual's sense of responsibility to help prevent and intervene in sexual and intimate- partner violence. The program also aims to increase empathy and awareness of the problems that victims experience.



(U) **Substance-Abuse Prevention:** Programs that try to prevent substance abuse or limit the development of problems associated with using psychoactive substances through intervening, raising awareness, and supporting recovering addicts.

(U//FOUO) **Limited:** Substance-abuse prevention hotlines provide lessons learned for terrorism prevention service providers that may help increase reporting and the likelihood of early interventions. Also, lessons learned from some programs' use of recovering addicts in other individuals' recovery plans could be applied to former extremists.

(U) **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Helpline** is a free confidential 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week information service in English and Spanish for individuals and family members facing mental or substance use disorders. SAMHSA's service provides referrals to community-based organizations, local treatment facilities, and support groups. Callers may order free reference publications.



(U) **Suicide Prevention:** Programs that try to reduce suicide risk factors and promote resilience or coping.

(U//FOUO) **Limited:** Suicide-prevention efforts provide resources that may help increase reporting and the likelihood of early interventions.

(U) **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline<sup>USPER</sup>** is a network of local crisis centers that provides free confidential emotional support for people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress, prevention and crisis resources for loved ones, and best practices 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

# (U//FOUO) EXPANDING US INTERVENTION PROGRAMS WILL PROBABLY INCREASE BYSTANDER REPORTING

"911, WHAT'S YOUR EMERGENCY?"



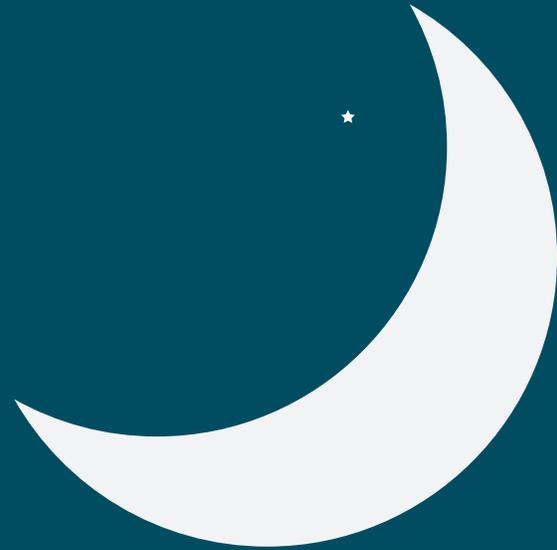
(U//FOUO) We assess that developing additional intervention programs for individuals displaying signs of radicalization that provide potential alternatives to prosecution would probably encourage families and other bystanders to report concerning behavior and help prevent attacks. Intervention programs typically use social workers, mental health professionals, employment and family counselors, and law enforcement personnel to develop individualized approaches to steer a person away from violent extremism. Several recent Homeland attackers' family members reported concerning behavior to law enforcement before the attacks occurred, but no terrorism intervention programs were available in their localities. Participation in these intervention programs is typically voluntary, and law enforcement should be involved to concurrently investigate any threat-related information.

★ (U) The Dallas-based mother of the individual who allegedly conducted an attack at a store in El Paso in August 2019 called local police in the weeks before

the attack because she was concerned that her son had purchased a firearm. However, she did not provide identifying information, suggesting that she was uncomfortable providing his identity to police and was informed that, on the basis of the information she provided, her son legally possessed the firearm. There are currently no terrorism intervention programs in the greater Dallas area that the alleged attacker's mother could have contacted for assistance.

★ (U) Family members and peers of ISIS supporter Corey Johnson—who in 2018 allegedly killed a 13-year-old boy and stabbed two others at a house in Florida—reported his violent behavior and affinity for extremist ideologies to school officials and local law enforcement as early as 2015, but there were no formal terrorism intervention programs in this location to which he could have been referred.

★ (U) Federal, state, and local law enforcement authorities



nationwide have arrested more than 40 people since the El Paso attack—largely because of bystander tips—on charges related to planning attacks or making threats on social media, suggesting that more reporting avenues would encourage more bystanders to identify suspicious activity and help prevent attacks.

(U//FOUO) Entities in several US locations have created nascent formal intervention programs that could serve as models for other localities. Although hotlines are an important reporting mechanism for threat-related information, a British academic study suggests that individuals who observe concerning behavior from a romantic partner, family member, or close friend prefer to discuss their concerns in person with local authorities and will do so only after they exhaust their own intervention efforts.

★ (U) Colorado's Preventing Targeted Violence (PTV) program, which consists of Federal, state, and academic organizations, works with social service and mental

health providers to intervene with radicalizing individuals. Members of the PTV network design individualized plans to address extremist drivers or grievances and have performed approximately 40 successful or ongoing interventions since 2016. The PTV team uses existing reporting mechanisms for truancy, school safety, and law enforcement encounters to obtain terrorism intervention referrals.

- ★ (U) A New York-based nonprofit organization runs the Disruption and Early Engagement Program (DEEP), which offers voluntary crisis-based counseling for radicalized individuals whom law enforcement has identified and referred to the program. DEEP participants also conduct outreach to educate the public about the dangers of terrorist messaging.
- ★ (U) Officers from the Miami-Dade Police Department Threat Management Section are trained in crisis intervention

techniques and are not limited to arresting individuals after they have committed a crime. These officers intervene whenever possible with at-risk individuals, providing them with preventive mental health and social service resources. The unit—created in response to the school shooting in Parkland in which 17 people were killed and 17 others were wounded in February 2018—could serve as a model for other localities. 

(U//FOUO) We assess that in the majority of Sunni violent extremist cases in the US, the individual's extremist views or activities were known by at least one bystander, often a family member, peer, or community authority figure. However, those individuals often did nothing to intervene, in part because they were afraid of getting their friend or loved one in trouble.



037403